Chhatrapati Shivaji: Saviour of Hindu India

Gajanan Bhaskar Mehendale

Preface

At the unveiling of the first statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Mumbai on 26th January 1961, Yashwantrao Chavan, the then Chief Minister of the State of Maharashtra, had expressed his views in the following words:

> "The world knows what might have befallen India had Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj not been. It might have been unnecessary to travel a great distance to look for the Pakistan border. Perhaps, that border might even have reached our very doorsteps." (Tr. From Marathi)

Muslim-majority regions of India had been included in Pakistan when the country was partitioned in 1947. What Chavan meant to indicate was that Muslims could well have formed a majority over a significantly larger area —'almost reaching our doorsteps'—in the absence of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. I propose in this small book to build upon this line of thought and present in some detail—with examples—what was the objective of the state Shivaji founded. This is the *internal* character and *essential* core of Shivaji's biography. Well-known thrilling events that form its *external* manifestations are not recounted here. The place commanded by Shivaji in Indian History—if not also in World History —may only be understood if this essential core objective is grasped. It is also necessary to examine the direction in which flow of Indian history was advancing and what turn it took because of the emergence of Shivaji. For this reason, unless we review conditions preceding the emergence of Shivaji, his biography may at best seem like an entertaining story brimming with random accounts of numerous breath-taking incidents.

I shall be stating nothing new while describing the state of affairs before Shivaji's lifetime, for it is amply clear. However, setting aside the single most important principle of history writing—truth—some modern historians have begun utilizing history not to tell the truth, but to hide it. In their belief that unity between Hindus and Muslims was necessary in the fight against the British, some historians of that time sought to distort the history of Hindu-Muslim conflicts, in which they succeeded to some extent. In our time, and for entirely different reasons, the same attempt is underway with greater cunning and more skill—even more deceitfulness. Historians in the courts of Islamic rulers proudly described atrocities committed by their employers. However, 'court' historians of our time compete with one another to conceal those very atrocities. One may attribute the trend to compulsions of changed times. Strategies have changed, but the basic inclination remains unchanged. Some among these so-called historians claim to be Marxists, which acts as a convenient camouflage for their communalism. Many, labouring under their pressure, and several out of an innocence they are reluctant to outgrow even in their maturity, toe the line of these hypocrites.

Concealing the truth and spreading falsehood can be done in many ways. Let us consider an example. Qutb-ud Din Aibak, whom Muhammad Ghori had appointed as his representative in India, built a grand mosque in Delhi on Ghori's orders, 'using the materials of 27 temples, on each one of which two million *dehliwals* [a unit of currency] had been spent'. Persian stone inscriptions found in the mosque say so. That mosque now stands in a dilapidated state in the precincts of the Qutb Minar. Hindu and Jain idols, along with other remains, may be seen in the vicinity even today. This event finds no mention whatsoever in the 1,200-page '*A Comprehensive History of India, Volume Five : Delhi Sultanat*' edited by Professors Mohamed Habib and Khaliq Ahmed of the Aligadh Muslim University, and published under the aegis of the Indian History Congress.

Amir Khusrau was accompanying Allauddin Khilji when the latter captured the fort of Chittor in 1303. Khusrau writes in his Persian prose work—*Khazainul-Futuh* (The Treasures of Victory)—that on entering the fort, Khilji issued orders to put to the sword every Hindu wherever found. As a consequence, thirty thousand Hindus, whom Khusrau calls "fools of hell", were slaughtered in a single day. Why does he call them "fools"? It is because, according to Khusrau's beliefs as well as those of many others, Hindus lacked the sense to embrace Islam! And "...of hell" because the Quran says all *kafirs*, i.e. non-Muslims, shall go to hell! Khusrau uses the word 'Hindu' in narrating the order issued by Khilji. Yet, Prof. Banarasi Prasad Saxena, who authored the portion relating to Khilji in the *Delhi Sultanat* cited above, puts out the lie: "Khusrau says that the sultan in his wrath ordered three thousand *muqaddams* to be put to death".

In his book *Tughluq Dynasty*, Dr. Mahdi Hussain writes about Timur's (Taimur Lang) invasion of India in 1398, basing his account on the English translation of Timur's autobiography *Mulfuzat-i Timuri* that is included in Elliot and Dowson's *The History of India as Told by Its own Historians,* Vol.III. On page 436 of the autobiography, it says that Timur ordered the execution of captive *kafirs*—Hindus—in his camp outside Delhi, whereupon a hundred thousand *kafirs* —idol-worshippers—were slaughtered that day. That notwithstanding, Mahdi Hussain, on p. 464 of his *Tughluq Dynasty,* uses this very translation to brazenly lie to his readers that Timur ordered the execution of "mixed Hindu-Muslim soldiers and rebels" who had been brought to his camp from various places.

Hundreds of instances of dishonest 'scholarship' may be cited in the so-called 'histories' written by these so-called 'renowned historians' where truth is hidden, lies are propagated, new text is added to translations, existing content relevant to the subject is omitted in translations or matter is deliberately mistranslated. Those not falling in line with the nexus are accorded choice labels like colonial, communal or nationalistic. The nexus has in its ranks many western writers, too, but they are not prominent enough to be given much attention. Curricular texts have also fallen prey to this spate of falsification. Here is one recent example. A history textbook prepared for the 12th Standard by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has the following statement: "Even when temples were destroyed during war, grants were later issued for their repair – as we know from the reigns of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb." To a question Shri Shivank Varma asked about the supporting evidence for the statement, the NCERT replied that "The information is not available on the files of the Department." It is no wonder that the NCERT had no information on its files: the statement is not just unsubstantiated but completely false.

Hundreds of examples of such rank dishonesty abound in both curricular and other literature. A competition of sorts appears to have begun among some writers to glorify rabidly fanatic bigots like Aurangzeb and Tipu. The reason for such glorification is not far to seek. However, I do not desire to dwell on the motives. All I seek to do is ascertain whether their narrations are backed by evidence. The only remedy available to a historian in order to counter consistent lying is to persist in telling the truth. The book I am writing to counter lies by truth is likely to take three or four months to complete and may run into more than one thousand five hundred pages. The present small book will be useful for those who do not desire to read the larger volume. References to detailed source material provided in the larger book have been omitted here.

Bhooshan, poet and Shivaji's contemporary, has already left us a scenario of what might have been but for Shivaji's initiative. The small erstwhile kingdoms of Kabul and Zabul in Afghanistan, the numerous Indian kings who resisted Islamic invasions for centuries, more particularly the kings of Mewar and Vijayanagar, the Jats, the Sikhs, and even ordinary peasants who repeatedly rose in rebellion, all have a share in protecting India from a terrible fate. While it is not possible to deal with each in the space of this small book, it must be noted that their sacrifice was not in vain. The long tenacious struggle for self-preservation and self-esteem fought for centuries found its fulfilment in Shivaji.

I have used the term 'Islamic State' for all those alien Muslim powers that ruled India because their sultans, beneficiaries of their patronage, their nobles, or their contemporaneous historians themselves identified them as 'Islamic' sultans and their militaries, 'Islamic' armies. Many modern historians also refer to them as 'Muslim States'.

The word 'Hindu' in this book is used in the sense and scope Bharatratna Dr. Babasaheb

Ambedkar used it to include, along with main-stream Hindus, also Jains, Budhhists and Sikhs.

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Acknowledgements

It is my usual practice to have a dear friend, Shri Pradeep Rawat, go through what I write and to discuss the content with him before finalizing it. I have done the same in the case of this book, too. However, the entire responsibility for what I have written here is mine alone.

I had delivered a talk on 31st May 2020. Shri Vinayak Gogte was kind enough to prepare a typewritten transcript of that talk. I did not have one myself. After perusing the typewritten matter, Shri Rawat and I felt that it ought to be reproduced in the form of a book. The present book is based on that text, and printed after some omissions and additions. I am grateful to Shri Gogte for his efforts.

Friends are ever forthcoming with all the assistance I need. I shall refrain from mentioning their names in view of the limitations of space in a book of this size.

G. B. Mehendale

Publisher's Note

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Part I : The Nature of Islamic States in India

1. *Jizya*

A characteristic of the Islamic State was the imposition of *Jizya* on non-Muslim subjects. Ayat 29 in Surah 9 of the Quran reads as follows:

> "Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the true religion [i.e., Islam], from among the People of the Book, until they pay the *Jizya* with willing submission and feel themselves subdued."

Here, "true religion" means Islam, "Last Day" means the day on which Allah shall judge everybody, and "People of the Book" are those to whom the Holy Book has been given, i.e., the Jews and Christians. Muslims are exhorted to fight these 'People of the Book'. But for how long? Till they do not embrace Islam and become Muslim or do not remit *jizya* in humility with their own hand. In effect, according to the Quran, Jews and Christians have three options: accept Islam, pay *jizya* or face death. This Quranic directive applies to all Muslims and for all time incessantly. Strictly speaking, the option of paying *jizya* is not available to Hindus because they are not included in the category of 'People of the Book'. Thus, the Hindu is left with just two choices: convert or be killed. If they choose not to convert to Islam, they have to continuously fight for self-preservation. Ayat 9 in Surah 66 says:

> "O Prophet! Strive hard against the Unbelievers and the Hypocrites and be harsh with them. Their abode is Hell, an evil refuge (indeed)."

It is observed in translations that the word 'unbelievers' is used in place of the word *'kuffar'* which appears in the original. One might unwittingly interpret 'unbeliever' as 'atheist' and be led to acknowledge someone as a 'believer' as long as he has faith in some superhuman power, say Lord Vishnu for instance. However, such a conclusion would be fallacious. According to the Quran, only one with faith in Allah qualifies as a 'believer'. In a nutshell, a believer in Allah is Muslim and an unbeliever in Allah (or a believer in any other deity) is non-Muslim or *kafir*. *Kuffar* in Arabic is the plural of *kafir*. It would be best to use the word *kafir* (or *kuffar*) in place of 'unbeliever' to avoid confusion. A hypocrite (*munafiq*) is one who poses as a Muslim but in actual fact is not faithful to Islam from within. Fighting (against *kafirs*) is *jihad*. It also means utmost struggle or striving, but in the context of this Ayat it must be taken to mean fighting against *kafirs*.

Why does the Ayat cited above recommend the waging of *jihad*? No specific reason is mentioned therein, but the fact that the people whom Muslims are urged to fight are unbelievers and hypocrites is adequate justification. A *jihad* against Jews and Christians would cease the moment they accept Islam or agree to pay *jizya.* Hindus on the other hand are not given the option of paying *jizya.* Abu Hanifa, one of the four great commentators of Islam, permits the imposition of *jizya* (besides the People of the Book) on Hindus and other *kafirs* who may be polytheists and idol worshippers. The Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence is accepted in India and a large part of the world. The 'permission' to pay *jizya* granted to Hindus by the Hanafi school must indeed be regarded as an act of great compassion, although it is akin to commuting a death sentence to life imprisonment!

The Ayat cited above (9:29) is the only one in the Quran dealing with *jizya,* and is thus fundamental to the subject. The Prophet himself had exacted *jizya* from some Jew and Christian tribes in Arabia. It was quite natural, in view of the Quranic directive and the Prophet's example, for Islamic regimes to impose *jizya* on its non-Muslim subjects. Indeed, most regimes did so. Akbar continued the practice for some time in the Mughal Empire but later abolished it. Aurangzeb resumed it. An account of Aurangzeb's reign, called the *Ma'asir-i Alamgiri,* was written within a few years of his death after consulting official documents. It states that Aurangzeb re-imposed *jizya* with the aim of propagating Islam and putting an end to *kafir* traditions (or, in other words, putting an end to

Hinduism itself). Needless to state, one of the aims of *jizya* is obvious: the burden of paying the tax should be so unbearable that as many Hindus as possible should be forced to convert to Islam in order to escape it.

Jizya has another objective. It is to be paid in utmost humility. The Nakshbandi Sufi preacher, Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi, who lived during the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir, writes in a letter, "The real purpose of levying *jizya* on them is to humiliate them...". What does humility imply? A conversation between Allauddin Khilji and his courtier, Qazi Mughisuddin, is reported by Ziauddin Barni, a historian who was their contemporary, in his Persian work *Tarikh-i Firozshahi*. One sentence therein states: Should the collector of *jizya* wish to spit into the mouth of the Hindu paying the tax, the latter must open his mouth ungrudgingly. Even if this could be an exaggeration, it is sufficient to give an idea of the mindset. The proper manner in which the *jizya* tax was to be rendered during Aurangzeb's reign is described in *Miraat-i Ahmadi*, which is a history of Gujarat in Persian, as well as in an *akhbar* (i.e., an official record of court proceedings). The person paying the *jizya* had to approach the office on foot (he could neither ride a horse nor use a palanquin); he had to go in person (proxies were not permitted); the officer collecting the *jizya* would remain seated and the person remitting it had to do so standing. This practice was prevalent for a long time. In some places, like Morocco for instance, the collector would slap the payer after the *jizya* was paid. This does not seem to have been practiced in India—at least it is not mentioned in any contemporaneous source.

Some Islamic religious teachers were of the opinion that Hindus ought not to be given the 'escape route' of *jizya*, but only given a choice between conversion and death. Ziauddin Barni, in his *Sahif-i Nat-i Muhammadi* in Persian, records an incident concerning such teachers. In brief it is as follows: Some Islamic teachers in the 13th Century approached the Sultan of Delhi—Iltutmish—with a demand that *jizya* should not be exacted from Hindus and only the choice between conversion and death be given to them. Iltutmish delegated the responsibility of responding to his *vizier*, Nizam-ul Mulk Junaidi, who said that 'while their plea was reasonable, Muslims in India in comparison with Hindus were only as few as salt in food; what you ask for will only be possible when our number and military strength increases'.

The *jizya* was unbearable especially for the poor. The Quran does not state the rates at which it should be levied. The Hanafi school fixes three different rates for three categories of taxpayers: the poor paid 12, the middle classes 24 and the rich paid 48 *dirhams* [a unit of currency]. During Aurangzeb's reign, according to the *Miraat-i Ahmadi*, the rates were 48 *dirhams* for those with property exceeding 10,000 *dirhams*, 24 *dirhams* for those owning in excess of 200 *dirhams* and 12 *dirhams* for those owning less than 200 *dirhams*. Clearly, the burden of the tax was heaviest on the poor sections, who paid in excess of 6 per cent per annum of their net worth. Middle classes paid between ¼ and 6 per cent, while the rich paid less than ¼ per cent. Firozshah Tughlaq says in his Persian work *Futuhat-i Firozshahi* that Hindus were converting to Islam in large numbers because of *jizya*.

Some of those who hold a brief in support of Islamic regimes, claim that *jizya* was collected from Hindus because they were exempt from military service. This argument is entirely incorrect. *Jizya* was imposed on the basis of what the Quran says, not because of someone's opinion in later times. Second, if exemption from military service was the only reason, there should have been no need to subject taxpayers to ignominy during the process of collection. It is true that Hindus in military service did not attract *jizya*. The reason is quite clear: *jizya* could hardly be levied upon the very same armed personnel whose force of arms was being utilized to exact the tax. *Jizya* was also not imposed upon women, the blind and children, who were in no position to pay the tax.

2. Iconoclasm and Temple Defilement/ Destruction

The second speciality of Islamic regimes was the desecration of idols and destruction of temples. They had before them the model set down by the

Prophet himself. Muhammad was born in Mecca where he began preaching Islam and soon began criticizing the religion of the idol-worshipping Meccans. This naturally led to social tensions, as a result of which Muhammad migrated to Medina (an event called *hijrat*). His following began increasing in numbers and, after a few years, he conquered Mecca. Immediately after the conquest of Mecca, he broke down the 360 idols that were housed within the temple known as the Kaaba. We shall see with some examples how Islamic rulers in India emulated their Prophet.

Muhammad Ghori defeated and executed Prithviraj Chauhan in 1192 CE and returned to Ghazni after deputing his slave, Qutbuddin Aibak, to remain in India. Aibak became sultan after Ghori's death. This man constructed a large mosque in Delhi on Ghori's orders. An inscription on stone in Persian at the site says material from 27 temples was used in its construction. The Archaeological Department is in charge of the mosque, which is in ruins today. Relics from Hindu and Jain temples may still be seen there. It used to be known as the 'Quwwat ul-Islam' (i.e., the 'Might of Islam') mosque. The 'might' to which the name alludes is the 'might' displayed in the destruction of Hindu and Jain temples.

Also during the reign of Aibak, in 1202 CE, one of his lieutenants, Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji, demolished a large Budhhist Vihar in Bihar and slaughtered Budhhist monks that were living there.

An account of this destruction is recorded in the Persian *Tabkat-i Nasiri* by Minhajuddin, a historian who lived at the time. Many principal Budhhist Vihars, particularly in Bihar, were destroyed around this time. Some historians attribute the decline of Budhhism in India to the destruction of its Vihars—the very centres of the faith—by Islamic rulers.

The deity of Mahakaleshwar at Ujjain is one of the twelve sacred *jyotirlingas* according to Hindu tradition. Iltutmish demolished the then existent temple, carried away the sacred idol to Delhi and threw it in front of the then Jami Masjid so that it would be trodden underfoot by Muslims entering or leaving the mosque. Minhajuddin reports these events in his *Tabkat-i Nasiri.*

Firozshah Tughlaq attacked Jagannath Puri and broke the idol in the temple there along with several other idols in the vicinity. All these were carted away to Delhi and thrown in front of various mosques to be trodden upon by Muslims. This event is described by historian Shams Siraj Afif, who lived during the time, in his Persian work, *Tarikh-i Firozshahi.* The same incident is also recorded in the Persian work called *Seerat-i Firozshahi* the name of whose author is not known.

It is now common knowledge that one of Babur's officers demolished the Ram Temple in Ayodhya and built a mosque in its place. I shall not repeat those details. However, another incident involving Babur and pertaining to iconoclasm bears mention here. Babur captured the Gwalior Fort in

1526. Huge Jain rock bas reliefs which could also be called petroglyphs, had been fashioned on the cliff faces surrounding the fort. Babur writes in his autobiography, the *Baburnama*, that he ordered their destruction. In later times, Jains used a special kind of plaster to restore these carvings.

Sikh sources say that Shah Jahan demolished a Gurudwara in 1634 in Lahore. Aurangzeb demolished an exquisite Jain temple in Ahmedabad when he was the Governor of Gujarat in 1645-46 CE. A German traveller and adventurer, Mandelslo, had visited the temple in1638 CE and has left us a description of its magnificence. The *Mirat-i Ahmadi*, a history of Gujarat in Persian, says that Aurangzeb demolished that temple, as does the Frenchman who visited India during the Shivaji Era, Thevenot, in his travelogue.

After Aurangzeb acceded to the throne, he ordered the demolition of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in 1669 CE and built a mosque on the site, an event that finds mention in an *akhbar* (or official transcript of court proceedings). Later, when Maratha influence in North India increased by leaps and bounds, Ahalyabai Holkar re-constructed the Vishwanath Temple adjacent to the mosque.

These instances of destruction pertain to single temples. But multiple temples were also demolished almost simultaneously or at short intervals. According to details available in the *Ma'asir-i Alamgiri*, Aurangzeb ordered the demolition of more than three hundred temples located in the Udaipur, Jaipur and Jodhpur regions within a span of just seventeen months from March 1679 to August 1680 CE.

Of the hundreds of temples demolished on Aurangzeb's orders, I would now mention the case of just one as it commands a special place in every Maharashtrian's heart. When Aurangzeb had camped at Pandharpur in 1705 CE, he issued orders to demolish the temple and have butchers from the army camp slaughter cows at the sacred site. An *akhbar* of the time says that this order was implemented.

A year after the Battle of Panipat, in 1762 CE, Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded Punjab and blew up the Harmandir Gurudwara by filling it up with gunpowder. He also slaughtered cows and poured their blood in the waters of the lake surrounding the gurudwara. (Sikhs do not kill cows. In the fifth and sixth verses of the prayer to Goddess Durga called the *Ugardanti* composed by Guru Govind Singh, he pleads to the goddess 'to command him to kill the Turks', 'to free the world of cow slaughter', 'to fulfil their ardent desire to free cows from ill-treatment' and 'to protect cows by killing demons'.) Sikhs rebuilt the *gurudwara* in later times.

Some who express their support of Islamic regimes say that temples were demolished for no reason other than the wealth they possessed. This justification is vacuous because, if indeed wealth was the only reason, there would have been no need to haul idols over long distances and throw them at the steps of mosques for the 'faithful' to trample them underfoot; nor would there be any need whatsoever to break them to pieces. It might have sufficed for the vandal to merely loot the temple of its wealth but let the idols be; he could always return for another spree of loot when more wealth had accumulated. This was a decidedly more far-sighted programme that would have ensured a continuous source of revenue. But none seems to have seen any merit therein. This was because their motivation was entirely different. The three hundred and sixty idols that used to be worshipped inside the Kaaba were certainly not broken by the Prophet for pecuniary gain. He opposed idol-worship, which ideal was the inspiration for Islamic rulers in India. The wealth they looted along with idol-breaking was just an agreeable fringe benefit.

Another justification proffered by some writers is that the invader destroyed / desecrated sacrosanct icons of the latter's faith, like temples, to demonstrate his triumph over the existing regime. At the very outset, this premise is unsubstantiated, imaginary. Secondly, if this were indeed true, Aurangzeb, by the same logic, would have destroyed mosques in Bijapur after he had vanquished the Adilshahi Kingdom. But he did not do so. He only demolished temples. No doubt, the argument pushed by these writers had not reached his ear!

3. *Jihad* and Prisoners of War

Almost the exact content of Ayat 9 of Surah 66 (cited earlier) is repeated in Ayat 73 of Surah 9:

> 0 Prophet! strive hard against The Unbelievers and the Hypocrites, And be firm against them. Their abode is Hell, An evil refuge indeed

According to Islam, the status of those who perform *jihad* is higher than those who choose to stay at home.

> Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home). Except those who are disabled. And those who strive And fight in the cause Of Allah with their goods And their persons. Allah hath granted A grade higher to those Who strive and fight With their goods and persons Than to those who sit (at home). Unto all (in Faith) Hath Allah promised good: But those who strive and fight Hath He distinguished Above those who sit (at home) By a great reward.- Ranks specially bestowed By Him and Forgiveness And Mercy. For Allah is Oft-forgiving. Most Merciful

Ayat 193 of Surah 2 provides a prescription for how long a *jihad* is to be waged.

> And fight them on Until there is no more Persecution And the religion becomes Allah's. But if they cease, Let there be no hostility Except to those Who practise oppression

"Persecution" here refers to a religion other than Allah's religion; "if they cease" means if they cease indulging in disbelief; "those who practice oppression" implies *kafirs*, non-Muslims.

The nature of *jihad*, as gleaned from the Quran, may be summed up as follows: *Jihad* is an armed offensive waged by Muslims along with their lives and means against *kafirs*, i.e. non-Muslims, for the protection and propagation of Islam. This offensive is to be continued till Islam becomes the only religion in the world, or till the time when all other religions are uprooted. The grade of a *mujahid* (the person joining in a *jihad*) is far higher than one who does not participate. Whenever a call for *jihad* is issued by the leader of Muslims, it is incumbent upon all Muslim males, except the physically incapacitated, to embark upon the *jihad*.

Jihad is war, and war results in prisoners being taken. Let us first examine what treatment the Quran and the Prophet's actions prescribe for prisoners of war.

In 627 CE, Prophet Muhammad attacked the settlement of the Jewish Banu Quraiza tribe in Arabia. Of the prisoners who were brought to Madina, all male captives numbering six or seven hundred were beheaded in the presence of the Prophet. Some of the women and children were sold at various places in Arabia and the remaining were distributed among the Muslims. According to the Quran, i.e., according to the rules framed by Allah, one-fifth of the booty, which included women and children, came to the Prophet as his share. He chose for himself a woman called Raihana whose husband had been beheaded along with all the other male captives. It is clear from this act of the Prophet that Islam bestows upon Muslims a right to have sexual relations with *kafir*, i.e., non-Muslim, women captives, which right is supported by the Quran, too. Ayat 22 to 24 of Surah 4 lists those categories of women whom Muslims are forbidden to marry. After enumerating mothers, daughters, sisters, etc., in Ayat 23, the Quran says in Ayat 24:

> Also (prohibited are) Women already married,
> Except those Whom your right hands possess:

Here, "...right hands possess..." refers to women made captive during war. One will find the same meaning of the phrase in any translation of the Quran. Even in the edition of the Quran, which includes a translation in English, published at the orders of the Sultan of Saudi Arabia, a footnote to this Ayat states: "*Whom your right hands possess*: i.e., captives". In his Hindi translation of the Quran, M. Wahiduddin Khan also renders this Ayat in the same sense. This means, 'married women, except for those captured in war, are forbidden to you [i.e. Muslims]'. Or, to state this with greater clarity, even if a captive woman is married, she is not forbidden to you—you may have sexual relations with her. It is assumed here that the captive woman is *kafir.* Muslims are permitted by their faith to have sexual relations with *kafir* women without marrying them, or to convert them to Islam and then marry them. Since the woman is a captive, her consent for sex without marriage is unnecessary. A similar licence to keep sexual relations with captive (*kafir*) women is given to Muslims by Ayat 3 of Surah 4.

Three aspects regarding the treatment of prisoners of war become clear after we examine the Quran and the Prophet's conduct: Male *kafir* prisoners of war can be killed; *kafir* prisoners of war can be enslaved; the Muslim who has possession of a female *kafir* prisoner of war can have sex with her; being considered as 'property', slaves can also be bought and sold.

Let us now find out how Islamic regimes and rulers treated war prisoners in India.

Execution of Prisoners of War

Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, Iltutmish's grandson, ruled between 1246 and 1266 CE. The entire administration was managed by his Turkish nobleman, Balban. We shall now consider a campaign that this man undertook. Hindu peasantry frequently revolted at various places when religious and economic oppression of Islamic regimes became unbearable. What was the nature of these uprisings? Farmers would stop paying taxes, levy tolls on goods transported through their territories or resist the

State in every manner possible. Court histories of the time refer to them as thieves, bandits or rebels. Armies consisting of thousands of men had to be sent out; thousands used to be slaughtered and their wives and children sold into slavery. Despite all of this, such rebellions could never be eradicated entirely, but continued at one or another place even till the end of Aurangzeb's reign. Of course, these 'rebels' were not really thieves, but were forced to pick up arms and resort to such methods because of insufferable tyranny. They may have lacked organization, discipline or a leader like Shivaji. But they certainly were not thieves. Balban campaigned against such Hindu rebels located in a hilly region. Needless to mention, Hindus were slaughtered there, but he took captive two hundred and fifty prominent leaders and brought them to Delhi. Thereafter, outside the city, some were publicly trampled to death by lashing them to elephants' legs, some just cut down with swords by the Turks; skins of a hundred of them were peeled from head to foot with knives and hung over the gates of the city. Minhajuddin, who was chief justice of the sultanate at the time, describes all these gory details in his *Tabkat-i Nasiri*. In a fit of fiendish humour perhaps, he writes how 'two Hindus were made into four' (i.e., they were cut into pieces).

After Allauddin Khilji captured Chittor in 1303 CE and hostilities had ceased, he gave orders for Hindus to be killed wherever found. Accordingly, thirty thousand Hindus were killed in a single day.

Amir Khusrau, who is renowned for his poetry in Persian, was with Khilji during this campaign and has left us an account of these events in Persian prose in his *Khazainul-Futuh* (The Treasures of Victory).

Timur invaded India in 1398 CE. A reason for this incursion, according to what he writes in his autobiography *Malfuzat-i Timuri*, was the weakened state of Islamic sultans in India and the ascendance of *kafir* powers. It is stated in ten places in the book that this foray was a *Jihad*. Pillage and looting were always a consequence of such *jihad*. It is the reward that *jihadi* warriors obtain in this earthly life for the hazards they risked and the toil they expended; what they are to receive in the afterlife is quite separate. Accounts of the slaughter during this campaign are recorded in the autobiography. We shall only see two instances. All the inhabitants of a town called Loni on the outskirts of Delhi were rounded up, the Hindus were separated from Muslims and all the Hindus were slaughtered. On another occasion, on Timur's orders, a hundred thousand Hindus who were held as captives were slaughtered by his soldiers outside Delhi.

When Akbar captured Chittor in 1568, there were eight thousand Rajput soldiers and more than forty thousand peasants inside the fort. (These peasants probably lived in nearby villages and had taken refuge within the fort.) Akbar's court chronicler Abul Fazl writes that pleas from the peasantry were futile, and an order for a general massacre was issued resulting in almost thirty thousand people being put to the sword that day. The *Akbarnama*, in describing the siege of Chittor, names it a *jihad* at one place and refers multiple times to Mughal soldiers as '*gaziyan*' (Muslim soldiers fighting against enemies of Islam). The *jihadi* nature of the campaign becomes amply clear from the letter (*fathnama*) Akbar wrote to his officers to inform them of the conquest of Chittor. The word '*jihad*' occurs four times, the word '*kafir*' at least eight times, and Islam-centric allusions like 'banner of Islam', 'people of Islam' (i.e. Muslims), 'army of Islam' and 'soldiers of Islam' at least five times. It also contains at least twenty quotations from the Quran, most of which deal with the subject of fighting against *kafirs*.

Peter Mundy, who was an employee of the English East India Company, was living in Agra for some time during the reign of Shah Jahan. He was travelling from Agra to Patna in 1632 CE. His diary contains descriptions of what he saw every day as he was journeying, the towns he passed, the distances between them, and other details. A 'rebellion' by peasants had broken out somewhere along the way. He writes that he saw more than two hundred towers made out of human heads in an eighty kilometre (distance rendered in currently used units) stretch of road. Each tower was about ten or twelve feet high, circular in shape like the bastion of a fort, and had thirty or forty human heads fixed in niches on the outer wall. Just two hundred towers with an average of forty heads in each, yields a count of eight thousand heads in a distance of eighty kilometres, or a hundred heads per kilometre. The name of the officer responsible for this act of 'valour' was Abdullah Khan Firoz Jung. Mundy had earlier, in 1631 CE, seen similar towers in the vicinity of a town called Koil (now known as Aligarh, where the Muslim University is located). Later, in 1633 CE, on his way from Agra to Surat, he saw people hung from trees or impaled on iron stakes. He also provides names of the officers who showed such heroism: Saif Khan, Taj Khan, Bakir Khan, Farzand Khan, and many other Khans.

An incident in 1627 CE in connection with this Abdullah Khan Firoz Jung is mentioned in a biographical encyclopaedia of *mansabdars* (Mughal officers with revenue entitlements in lieu of salary) in Persian named the *Tazkirat ul-Khawanin* compiled by Shaikh Farid Bhakri, who had actually met this Abdullah Khan Firoz Jung. When Bhakri asked him how many *kafirs* he had killed in the numerous *jihads* he had waged, Firoz Jung replied that he had killed more than two hundred thousand *kafirs*, and had converted over five hundred thousand to Islam and sold them as slaves. He also bragged how the heads of all the *kafirs* he had killed would make two rows of towers all the way from Agra to Patna. The distance between the two towns is eight hundred kilometres, so perhaps this was not an empty boast. This was his 'score' till the year 1627 CE. He added handsomely to it in 1632 CE. This man was a favourite disciple of a Sufi preacher belonging to the Nakshbandi school.

Some writers feel such figures of mass killings, which are unambiguously stated in sources, should be regarded as exaggeration. Even if we assume that such a view is correct, what is the quantum by which they are presumed to be in excess of reality? One, ten, a hundred or a thousand? If a thousand still looks meagre, let us increase it to five thousand and concede that, for instance, the number put to the sword in Chittor was not thirty, but twenty-five thousand. If even this reduced number of killings fails to satisfy advocates of overestimation, are we to simply give it a label of 'exaggeration' and sweep the subject under the carpet? Or, worse, declare that massacres never happened? Secondly, if the number of mass killings is at all to be reduced, plausible reasons must be given why numbers should be regarded as exaggerations, by what number they ought to be reduced, as also why by such number and none other. None has ever given any of these reasons. Thirdly, if indeed numbers were inflated, what was the motive behind doing so? Clearly, it must have been to please those in power. Is it not an indication of a perverse mental depravity if rulers derived pleasure by reading descriptions of the numbers they had killed, bloated or otherwise? If the wickedness exists in the mind, it is not too difficult to put it into practice and actually make it happen. Finally, a reported number cannot necessarily be false only because it is large. A comparatively recent example may be cited. Hitler massacred six million Jews, first with bullets and later by forcing them into gas chambers. This fact is substantiated by impeccable evidence. The number is enormous. To a normal human being, six million would seem huge, as would six hundred thousand. In fact, killing even six hundred in a gas chamber would be horrendous and, given the enormity of the act, even such number would appear big. So, just because someone 'perceives' a certain number as large, it cannot mean that it is false.

A question is often raised about how such a large number of corpses could have been disposed off. Even recent history is more or less silent on such questions. Twenty thousand British soldiers were killed and sixty thousand wounded on 1st July 1916 in the Battle of the Somme in France during the First World War. All of this was within a span of just eight or ten hours. Even the British Government's official history of the First World War provides no details about the disposal of such a large number of dead bodies. So, we can only surmise about how the issue could have been tackled in the Middle Ages. The Jews, executed by firing squads in the initial stages of the Holocaust, were buried in graves they were first made to dig themselves. Timur's invading army had about a hundred thousand horsemen who, together with prisoners of war, could have dug ditches for disposal of bodies. It would not have been too strenuous a task for one horseman to dig one grave for disposal of one body. Many of the dead bodies might have been consumed by birds and beasts of prey that must have been plentiful at the time. It is also possible that many carcasses might have been thrown into rivers to be eaten up by riverine fauna. Survivors of massacres probably heaped the dead and collectively cremated them. Perhaps some could simply have been left to the elements. Ten thousand Hindus were massacred at Bhatner. Timur states in his autobiography that the decomposing bodies began contaminating the air, so he promptly left the place and resumed his advance.

The selected examples seen so far pertain to large scale massacres. However, being tortured to death was a punishment meted out to those who resisted Islamic rulers or who were suspected by the ruler to have even so much as expressed opposition. Guru Arjun Dev, the Fifth guru of the Sikhs, who lived in Govindwal (now Goindwal), was tortured and executed in May 1606 CE on Jahangir's order. He had not even taken up arms against Jahangir. What was his crime? Jahangir writes this in his autobiography *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, referring to his son Khusrau's rebellion:

> In Gobindwal, which is on the river Blyah (Beas), there was a Hindu named Arjun, in the garments of sainthood and sanctity, so much so that he had captured many of the

> simple-hearted of the Hindus, and even of the ignorant and foolish followers of Islam, by his ways and manners, and they had loudly sounded the drum of his holiness. They called him Guru, and from all sides stupid people crowded to worship and manifest complete faith in him. For three or four generations (of spiritual successors) they had kept this shop warm. Many times it occurred to me to put a stop to this vain affair or to bring him into the assembly of the people of Islam.
>
> At last when Khusrau passed along this road this insignificant fellow proposed to wait upon him. Khusrau happened to halt at the place where he was, and he came out and did homage to him. He behaved to Khusrau in certain special ways, and made on his forehead a finger mark in saffron, which the Hindus call *qashqa*, and is considered propitious. When this came to my ears and I clearly understood his folly, I ordered them to produce him and handed over his houses, dwelling places, and children to Murtaza Khan, and having confiscated his property commanded that he should be tortured and put to death.

A certain Shaikh Nizam Thanesari, according to Jahangir's autobiography,

> "...waited on Khusrau, and having gratified him with pleasant news, again led him out of the (right) path and then came to wait on me.

> As I had heard of these transactions, I gave him his road expenses and told him to depart for the auspicious place of pilgrimage (Mecca)."

Guru Arjun Dev was never accused of leading Khusrau astray; all he had done was to receive and welcome him. Yet, Shaikh Nizam Thanesari, was merely banished from Jahangir's kingdom to Mecca but Guru Arjun was executed. The reason for this discriminatory treatment is plain: Thanesari was Muslim, Guru Arjun was Hindu (Sikh). Moreover, according to his own writings, Jahangir was already prejudiced against Guru Arjun and had desired to convert him to Islam.

Jats in the Mathura region rose against Mughal rule in 1669 CE under the leadership of Gokla, who was ultimately captured and presented before Aurangzeb at Agra. He was ordered to be publicly executed by dismemberment, limb by limb. The *Ma'asir-i Alamgiri* says that Gokla's son and daughter were given (after conversion to Islam, of course) into the custody of Jawahir Khan to be raised; the daughter was married off to one of Aurangzeb's Muslim servants.

In 1675 CE, Kashmiri Hindus complained to Guru Tegh Bahadur, the Ninth Guru of the Sikhs, that they were being forcibly converted to Islam. The Guru reassured them, asking them to return and tell the Muslim officers that they (i.e. the Kashmiri Hindus) would convert if Guru Tegh Bahadur could first be converted. The Guru along with his companions, Bhai Matidas, Bhai Satidas and Bhai Dayaldas, was arrested and taken to Delhi. They were given a choice between conversion and death. They refused to convert to Islam and were tortured to death.

The *Ma'asir-i Alamgiri* describes how Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj was executed:

> That impious man (meaning Sambhaji Maharaj) had earlier ignored the value of the Emperor's favours. He had first escaped from the emperor along with his wicked father, and the second time from Diler Khan. Therefore, he was blinded the same night, and the next day the lying tongue of Kavi Kalash was silenced. It was appropriate that the polytheist and impious man, destined for hell, be killed and not be kept alive for his crimes and sins of imprisoning and killing Muslims, and plundering the cities of Islam. The fatwa of the masters of Sharia (Muslim Law) and the advice of the leaders of the Faith (i.e. Islam) and the State was that it would be proper to kill the hostile (harbi) robber. Therefore, after the victorious army reached Fathbad alias Koregaon on 21st Jamadi al-Awwal of the (regnal) year 32 (4th March 1689), he, along with Kavi Kalash, who used to be with him everywhere, were sent to the worst of hells by the sword that kills infidels, on the 29th of the same month (12th March, 1689).

The leadership of the Sikhs devolved upon Banda Singh Bahadur after the murder of Guru Govind Singh. In 1716, during the regime of Aurangzeb's great grandson Farrukhsiyar, Banda Singh with about seven hundred followers was brought to Delhi in a derisive procession. They were informed that those who convert to Islam would be spared. None agreed to convert. A hundred Sikhs were beheaded per day and in a week's time, all seven hundred were executed, and their bodies hung on trees. After three months, Banda Singh was brought to Bahadur Shah's grave near the Qutb Minar and given a choice between conversion and death. Banda Singh refused to convert. His four-year-old son Ajay Singh was placed in Banda Singh's lap and the executioner dismembered him with a long knife limb by limb. The child's heart was stuffed inside Banda Singh's mouth, his eyes were removed, limbs were severed, his skin and flesh were plucked out with red hot pincers and he was finally beheaded. It shall suffice to mention here that there are contemporaneous witnesses for these events.

Prisoners of War and Slavery

Many people, especially women and children, would be enslaved during *jihadi* campaigns. Ibn Battuta, a traveller from Tangiers in Morocco, came to Delhi in 1334 during the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq. He journeyed from Samarkand across the Hindukush mountain range to Ghazni and thence to India via Multan. In his travelogue he writes about the Hindu Kush: 'This mountain is called the Hindu Kush—or killer of Hindus—because many of the male and female slaves captured in India die here on account of the severe cold and heavy snowfall.' Reference to the name of the mountain range as "Hindu killer" appears in Battuta's original Arabic text as well as its French translation; it is not a figment of my imagination. The etymology of the word "Hindu Kush" given by Battuta is important from the point of view of history. The Persian word '*kushtan*' means 'to kill', whence the word '*kush*' meaning 'killer' is derived. Of course, the word 'Hindu Kush' is Persian. Since Ibn Battuta wrote in Arabic, he provides the meaning of the Persian word in Arabic as "*Qatil al-Hunud*" (i.e. 'Killer of Hindus'). Scott C. Levi writes in his paper *Hindus beyond the Hindu Kush: Indians in the Central Asian Slave Trade*, that Hindu men, women and children were transported in large numbers from India during Islamic regimes to be sold as slaves in Central Asian places like Bukhara, Samarkand and Tashkent. Their precise number may never be known, but it must be in several hundred thousands. Even though Shia Muslims and Zoroastrians from Iran and Christians from Russia were probably also enslaved, the proportion of Indian slaves must have been substantial—perhaps in excess of fifty percent. He presents evidence not just from histories of Islamic regimes in India, but also from those of Central Asia along with documents discovered there. Levi does not mention the reasons for the decline of the Mughal Empire and does not name the chief regime that replaced it, but it is well known that Shivaji's political successors dealt the death blow to the Mughal Empire that enabled the Jats and Sikhs to establish their own kingdoms. The facts Levi furnishes are complementary to Ibn Battuta's explanation of the word Hindu Kush. One may find another piece of evidence in the Persian language itself. In Persian, just as the word 'Hindu' indicates a person following the Hindu religion, it also means 'slave'. It is clear that the word acquired the latter meaning because Islamic regimes enslaved Hindus in large number.

Raja Bhimdev was comprehensively defeated in a battle in 1197 when Aibak advanced from Ajmer to Anhilwada in Gujarat. Aibak captured Anhilwada. Hasan Nizami, a contemporaneous chronicler, writes in his Arabic Persian bilingual work *Taj ul-Ma'asir* (i.e. Crown of History), that many Hindu chieftains were captured, more than fifty thousand *kafirs* were 'sent to hell' with the sword, and in excess of twenty thousand slaves fell into the hands of the victors (i.e. twenty thousand *kafirs* were enslaved). Nizami says the *kafirs* were 'sent to hell' because according to the Quran all non-Muslims are destined for hell. Aibak laid siege to the fort at Kalinjarin 1202 CE. The king surrendered and handed over the fort to Aibak. Nizami writes that temples were converted into mosques, fifty thousand were enslaved and, because of the Hindus that were made slaves, the whole ground took on a black hue. Hindus are darker of skin than Turks, which is why Hasan Nizami says with a suggestion of mockery that the ground appeared black. This derision is also an indication of their racism. It is for this very reason that one of the meanings of 'Hindu' in Persian is black.

Shams Siraj Afif dedicates an independent section in his *Tarikh-i Firozshahi* to the slaves that Firoz Shah Tughlaq had amassed. Some information that we may gather in brief is as follows. This sultan had made a rule for noblemen and officers at various places in his kingdom to send hand-picked slaves to his court whenever they attained military victories. Even along with the offerings (*nazrana*) that noblemen brought for the sultan, like elephants, horses or jewellery, they would bring slaves, too. When the number of slaves became considerable, Firoz Shah sent them off to various places in his kingdom. He had a hundred and eighty thousand slaves in all. Some of these would be given training in the crafts, some would be given religious education, some would be made to learn the Quran by heart, some would be assigned to work in the administration while some would be made part of the sultan's personal staff. Thousands of armed slaves would always be with the sultan on campaigns.

Afif does not say how many of these were Hindu and how many Muslim. Perhaps they were all Muslim—duly converted after being made slaves, of course. The *Hedaya*, a rulebook of Islamic law based on the Hanafi School, says that a prisoner of war should not be killed if he becomes Muslim, but may be made a slave because the reason for making him a slave (i.e. his being *kafir*) was present before he became Muslim; likewise, a *kafir* who becomes Muslim before he is taken prisoner in war cannot be made a slave. Offspring of slaves become slaves. (The offspring of a slave woman from a free man does not become a slave.) All of this means that those who were slaves under Islamic regimes were themselves or their forefathers, *kafir*.

Timur entered Delhi on 19th December 1398 CE. On the night of 27th December 1398 CE, his forces commenced a massacre of Hindus on some pretext. This continued for three days. The survivors of the massacre were made captive and were daily brought out of Delhi in groups and assigned, as slaves of course, to the contingents of different nobles. There were several thousand artisans among the captives; these were distributed among the nobles. Stone masons were segregated from the rest because Timur desired to build a large mosque in Samarkand.

Francesco Pelsaert was employed by the Dutch East India Company and was in its Agra factory from 1621 to 1627 CE during Jahangir's reign. In his report written in 1627, he says:

> "The land would give a plentiful, even an extraordinary yield, if the peasants were not so cruelly and pitilessly oppressed; for villages

> which, owing to some small shortage of produce, are unable to pay the full amount of the revenue-farm, are made prize, so to speak, by their masters as governors, and wives and children [of peasants] sold, on the pretext of a charge of rebellion."

Similar was also the state of affairs in Shah Jahan's reign. Peter Mundy halted at Koil (present day Aligarh) for four days in December 1631. He writes in his diary:

> "A *faujdar* is a captain of 2 or 3000 horse with 5 or 6000 foot, more or less accord-ing to the place where he is sent, appointed of purpose to keep that part of the country quiet, there being a governor besides ordinarily; but this man [Taj Khan] held both places, having his maintenance from the labourers who are generally Hindus, whom they call *ganwars* [villagers], using them as the Turks do the poor Christians that live under their tyranny (in some parts), taking from them all they can get by their labour, leaving them nothing but their bad, mud walled ill thatched covered houses, and a few cattle to till the ground besides other miseries. For thieves that over their part of the country do many time belong to some strong place afar off, taking their lodgings in these poor villages (which they [the villagers] durst not contradict nor cannot prevent), from whence they make their sallies on passengers. News hereof

> cometh to the *faujdar*, who makes the place with his *lashkar*, and without resistance kills most of the men. The rest, with women and children, are carried away and sold for slaves. Otherwhile the people of a whole town are removed to another afar off, and the people of that town to this again. This happens sometimes to those that are innocent; but for the most part the towns themselves are not without store of thievish *Gacaores* [Gakkhar, a Rajput tribe]. Here now are in this castle about 200 of them prisoners, because they cannot pay the tax imposed on them, which heretofore was paid when their corn was sold; but now they must pay for it in the ground. This is the life of the Hindus or naturals [i.e. natural inhabitants] of Hindostan etc. [and other] parts of India under the subjection of the Mogol hereaways."

We have seen earlier how, in 1627 CE during the reign of Jahangir, Abdullah Khan Firoz Jung bragged to Shaikh Farid Bhakri that 'he had killed more than two hundred thousand *kafirs*, and had converted over five hundred thousand to Islam and sold them as slaves'. Such atrocity, born of religious fanaticism, was continued unfazed by this favourite disciple of a Sufi saint in the reign of Shah Jahan, too. Peter Mundy, in a diary noting dated 17th August 1632, describes what he saw during his journey from Agra to Patna:

> From Bakewar hither were about 200 *minars,* with heads mortared and plastered in, leaving out nothing but their very face, some 30, some 40, some more some less. This was Abdullah Khan's exploit (who is now governor of Patna), by the King's [i.e. Shah Jahan's] order. For this way was so pestered with rebels and thieves, that there was no passing, so that the King sent Abdullah Khan with 12,000 horse and 20,000 foot to suppress them, who destroyed all their towns, took all their goods, their wives and children for slaves, and the chiefest of their men causing their heads to be cut off and to be immortered as before [depicted].

Accounts of the French traveller Bernier and Italian Manucci say that wives and children of farmers unable to pay taxes were sold as slaves in Aurangzeb's regime also.

Atrocities on Women Prisoners of War

Islam gives to Muslim males the right to sexual enjoyment of married or single *kafir* women captured in war. Indian history provides numerous examples of how Islamic rulers in India used this right given to them by their religion. We have seen with ample examples that Islamic rulers used to enslave *kafir* women and children. Is it necessary to mention what fate awaited those women? Let us see more instances.

In 1398 CE, Allauddin Khilji sent a force to destroy the Somnath Temple. Mahmud of Ghazni had, in 1025 CE, already broken the idol and carried its pieces to Ghazni. The Irani author Alberuni had seen one piece of the idol at Ghazni. He writes:

> Another part of the idol from Somanath lies before the door of the Mosque of Ghazni, on which people rub their feet to clean them from dirt and wet.

Later, Raja Bhimdev of Anhilwada (1024-1064 CE), who hailed from the Chalukya (Solanki) Dynasty, built a wooden temple at Somnath. As the structure of this wooden temple weakened, Raja Kumarpal from the same dynasty restored it before May-June 1169 CE. It was to demolish this temple that Allauddin sent a force. The temple was destroyed and the chief idol was sent to the court to show Hindus that their powerless Deity had been shattered. According to Barni in his *Tarikh-i Firozshahi*, the wives and daughters of Raja Karna of Gujarat fell into the hands of the Islamic forces during this campaign and, according to Khusrau's Persian poem *Dawalrani Khizr Khan*, Karna's wife Kamaladevi was consigned by Allauddin to his harem.

Ibn Battuta describes the manner in which the Islamic festival of Id was celebrated in the court of Muhammad Tughlaq. Here is a portion from his writings:

> On the first day of the festival daughters of the *kafir* Rajas captured in war that year sing and dance (in the court). The Sultan gives them away to the amirs and foreign dignitaries. Then come the daughters of other *kafirs* who sing and dance. The Sultan gives them away to his brothers, his relations, etc. The Sultan holds this court after the afternoon prayer.

It goes without saying that these daughters of Hindus did not willingly sing and dance in Tughlaq's court; they were forced to do so. And, after all this humiliation, they were cast into someone's harem to be treated as mere objects of sexual gratification. The gross display of their dishonour would follow the *namaz* (prayer) during the Id festival. Such was the 'special' festival of Id! In any case, these things were occurring throughout the year, Id or no Id. Ibn Battuta writes further:

> At that time some *kafir* female captives arrived in Delhi. The *vazir* sent ten of them to me. I gave one of them to the man who brought them to me, but he was not satisfied. My companions took three of them; I do not remember what happened to the rest. Female captives are very cheap in this country.

Individually, Ibn Battuta had been allotted ten captive *kafir* women. This only shows that the number of *kafir* women who had come upon such misfortune must have run into not hundreds, but thousands, which is why women slaves acquired as loot were available so cheaply. Ibn Battuta does not even remember what happened to six of the ten *kafir* women slaves that he had received. How would he? For him, this must have been a minor routine incident. For those women, on the other hand, it must have been nothing less than a living hell. Writes Ibn Battuta: When Muhammad Tughlaq decided to send Ibn Battuta as his ambassador to China in 1342 CE, he sent some gifts for the Chinese King. Among the 'articles' sent were a hundred Hindu slaves and an equal number of Hindu slave women who were singers and dancers. Hindu war captives or those who were incapable of paying taxes would be made slaves under Islamic regimes, examples of which are provided above.

Muhammad Tughlaq died in 1351 CE and was succeeded as sultan by his cousin, Firozshah. He invaded the kingdom of Jajnagar (i.e. Orissa) in 1361 CE. This campaign is described in the *Seerat-i Firozshahi* (author unknown). The author says that the Jagannath Temple was destroyed and the sultan gave orders for the Jagannath idol to be uprooted and thrown to the ground in order to insult it; idols from other temples were also uprooted like the Jagannath idol, so that they could be trampled underfoot by Muslims at the thresholds of various mosques. The book says further:

> 'The officers in the sultan's army assigned with the task of pillage brought information that a hundred thousand inhabitants of Jajnagar had taken refuge along with their families and relations on an island with a large lake, just off the sea coast. Hearing this news, the sultan proceeded to that place. Giving orders that the polytheists (i.e. Hindus) should be massacred and the island be submerged in their blood, he deployed his forces on all sides. Seeing the sultan's army, the people threw down their weapons and surrendered. The sultan's soldiers surrounded and put those who follow the evil religion to the sword and submerged them in a sea of their blood. All kinds of women were taken captive—young, old, those with children, those who were pregnant, etc.—and assigned as slaves to the houses of soldiers. No remnant remained of the *kafirs* except their blood.'

It is hardly necessary to mention what dire fate must have been the lot of those enslaved women.

The conflict between Sher Shah and Humayun is well known. Humayun's family had on one occasion fallen into the hands of Sher Shah. But they were treated with respect and sent back with honour. The reason is not far to seek: the women were Muslim. Otherwise, this man was no different from other Islamic rulers. He had demolished a temple in Jodhpur and built a mosque in its place.

He laid siege to the Raisen Fort. The local raja relied on Sher Shah's assurance and surrendered. Sher Shah went back on his word, killed the king, sold his daughter in the market to a troupe of dancers and, to curtail the continuance of the family, had the prince castrated.

Akbar sent an army to capture the kingdom of Gadh Katanga in 1564 CE. (Gadh and Katanga were two towns that are now included in Jabalpur.) The king had died and his queen, Durgavati, was ruling. She was seriously wounded during the battle against the Mughal forces and, in order not to fall into the hands of such an enemy, stabbed herself to death. Her young son Veernarayan, too, was killed. His wife and Durgavati's sister Kamalavati—i.e. the young wife and her aunt-in-law—were captured by the Mughals. They were both hurled into Akbar's harem. This episode is recounted in Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama*, which is an official court history of Akbar's rule.

Juzar Singh Bundela of Orchha was a Mughal *mansabdar*. Shah Jahan sent a military force against him in 1635 CE because he had rebelled, or on the pretext that he had rebelled. Juzar Singh was killed. Womenfolk of his household were thrust into Shah Jahan's harem. Abdul Hamid Lahori records this incident in the *Badshahnama*, the official history of Shah Jahan's reign.

4. Conversion

The Prophet had acquired some followers in Medina when he had migrated there from Mecca. In time, the number of followers increased. Some from Mecca came to Medina and became Muslim. Yet, a majority of Meccans adhered to the faith of their forefathers. When the Prophet had gained sufficient might, he set out on 1st January 630 CE to conquer Mecca. He encamped outside the city when the Meccan leader, Abu Sufyan, came out to meet him (to gauge the possibility of a compromise). The Prophet said to him, 'Abu Sufyan, the time has arrived for you to concede that I am Allah's Prophet.' Abu Sufyan replied, 'I still have some doubts about that.' Then the Prophet's uncle Abbas said to Sufyan, 'Surrender and admit that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet, or else you will lose your head.' Thereupon, Sufyan tamely submitted—i.e. he became Muslim.

Even before this, in 628 CE, the Prophet had sent out his envoys to some rulers with letters inviting them into Islam. The message in these missives was, 'Accept Islam and stay safe'. (Of course, the underlying meaning was 'if you do not accept Islam, you will be attacked and you will not remain safe.') At that time at least, none except the ruler of Abyssinia paid any heed to the invitation.

In my opinion, Indians who converted to Islam did so largely out of fear, force or allurement; miracles shown by Sufis may also have been a reason in some cases. The number of Indians converting to Islam purely because they were impressed by its philosophy must have been very small. Even in our time, we hardly find anyone converting to Islam because he is captivated by Islamic thought. The memory of forced conversions is epitomized in a Marathi idiom which, literally, means to make someone a Muslim by beating him up. The implied sense of the idiom, as given in Molesworth's Marathi-English Dictionary, is 'to beat into willingness, to force to consent'. Events of the past are oftentimes concealed in such sayings. The intended meaning is clear: no one becomes Muslim willingly, one needs to use force. (Molesworth's Marathi-English dictionary was first published in 1831, with a reprint in 1857.)

Let us examine in the following paragraphs some examples of conversions under Islamic regimes in India.

Qutbuddin Aibak captured the fort of Koil (i.e. present day Aligarh) in 1194 CE. Hasan Nizami writes in the *Taj ul-Ma'asir* that the wise among the inhabitants became Muslim without demur; the rest were massacred.

In the *Futuhat-i Firozshahi* (Triumphs of Firozshahi) in Persian, authored by Firozshah Tughlaq, we find the following account:

> I invited *dhimmis* [*kafirs* to whom concession of paying *jizya* is given] to the true religion. I made a proclamation that any *kafir* who

> pronounces the *kalma* of *tauhid* [i.e. the Islamic statement that there is no God but Allah] and accepts Islam would be exempted from paying *jizya* according to the directives of the religion of Muhammad Sahib. When this proclamation reached the common people, Hindus began collecting in large numbers to become Muslim. They keep coming from all four directions till now; they are exempted from *jizya*, given a reward and honoured with robes.

Of course, this account is exaggerated. There is no denying that the burden of paying *jizya* must have caused some to convert to Islam. But the proportion of Hindus in India's population shows that a majority chose to remain Hindu despite the burden of *jizya*.

The real method of converting Hindus to Islam was the terror of death or force. Many people, however, refused to fall prey to terror. So they would be forcibly made to eat beef and made Muslim; this was reason enough for Hindu society to ostracize them. Despite such social banishment, they would continue adhering to Hinduism for a few generations. But gradually thereafter they would become fully Muslim. Thus, coercion by Muslims and ostracization by Hindus were the chief reasons for compelling Hindus to embrace Islam. We may cite instances of such Muslims being reconverted to Hinduism, but they are few and far between. The obstacle was not on account of religion, but undesirable social customs.

After killing Hemachandra, Akbar dispatched Pir Muhammad Sherwani *alias* Nasir-ul-Mulk to apprehend his family. The following extract from the *Akbarnama* tells us what happened thereafter:

> Hemu's father was captured and was brought alive before Nasir-ul-Mulk. The latter called upon him to change his religion. The old man answered: 'I have worshipped my God for eighty years according to this religion [i.e. Hindu religion]. Why should I change it now and, merely out of fear for my life and without understanding it, come into your way of worship.' Pir Muhammad heard his words as if he heard them not, and answered him with the tongue of the sword [i.e. killed him].

What follows is Akbar's own voluntary and willing admission that he forcibly converted people to Islam, when he was under no compulsion to make such a confession. Abul Fazl, in a section of his *Ain-i Akbari* dedicated to what Akbar said on different occasions, attributes this to his master:

> Formerly I persecuted men into conformity with my Faith and counted them as *Musalmans*. As I grew in knowledge, I was overwhelmed with shame.

A similar quote also appears in the *Akbarnama.* Both are part of a record that was written as the official court history on Akbar's orders. So there is no doubt about their authenticity. The quote in the *Akbarnama* dates to around 1579 CE, and that in the *Ain-i Akbari* to around the same time. It is not known how many Hindus Akbar and his officials had converted to Islam under duress before that date. Perhaps Hindus captured in war used to be converted. It is commendable if one feels remorse for a crime he has committed, but making a confession of either the crime or the "shame" one felt can hardly be called a virtue. Committing murder is punished; not committing murder or to stop committing murder cannot earn a reward, nor can past murders be pardoned. When Akbar made the two remarks, he had reformed considerably. For being absolved of a crime, the miscreant needs to do three things: repentance, compensation and atonement. Akbar only did the first; the other two were not done. Therefore, it must be said that his repentance was hollow. For instance, Akbar merely 'gave permission' to those he had forcibly converted to return to their original faith; he is not known to have actually facilitated their return. Had he done so, he might have fulfilled the second prerequisite of being absolved; the third would still have remained to be done. As for the venal crime of forcing women captives into his harem, there is not even a remote hope of absolution. We need to consider another aspect. Akbar himself may have undergone reform, but his officers had not. Instances may be cited to show that his officers were still committing crimes, like attempting forced conversion and temple-breaking, even after he had reformed; Akbar is not known to have punished any one of them.

Examples of conversion to Islam by allurement, fear or force are found in abundance during Aurangzeb's reign. Here are just five examples from the *akhbars*.

19th September 1666 CE– "Jagjeevan submitted an application: 'Because the government has given me a debt of Rs.500, I am converting to Islam'. The Badshah ordered that the sum be made good by the government and Jagjeevan be converted."

22nd April 1667 CE– "Makarand and three others became Muslim. The *kanungoi* of Kohri Pargana was bestowed on them and they were given robes of honour."

'Kanungo' was a hereditary office similar to 'Deshpande' in Maharashtra. Their job was to maintain accounts of the revenue of a *pargana*.

14th August 1680 CE – "The Badshah ordered Darbar Khan to retain the women and children out of the captives at Mauja Yaval and hand over thirty-five male captives to Ihtsham Khan who should convert them and teach them namaz. The said *kotwal* converted them to Islam as per orders."

No option was given here. If they were ordered to be converted, they would be converted. Period.

14th December 1682 CE – "It was learnt from a portion of a letter from Kartalab Khan, the Officer at Surat: An order was given concerning forty-five servants of Sambha *makhoor* that whoever becomes Muslim should be kept in prison and the others be killed. I made Muslim those who were willing to become Muslim and killed (the other) thirteen."

The *akhbar* refers to Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj as Sambha *makhoor.* The word is Arabic and means 'defeated' or 'fit to be defeated'.

7th April 1685 CE – "Jumdatul-Mulk was ordered to write a *hasbul-hukm* (a royal order not signed by the sultan but by some subordinate official) to the *fauzdars* and *diwans* of the realm: To those Hindus agreeing to become Muslim, are earmarked Rs.4 per male and Rs.2 per female from the treasury. But if they are becoming Muslim of their own volition for the sake of Islam, they need not be paid."

Tipu Sultan surpassed even Aurangzeb when it came to conversions. In a letter dated 19th January 1790 CE to a nobleman called Badruzzaman Khan, he wrote:

> 'We have recently achieved a significant victory in Malabar and converted four hundred thousand *kafirs.* Now we are advancing against the accursed Rama Nair [king of Travancore] with no loss of time. By the grace of Allah and the aid of the Prophet, we shall soon make him and his subjects Muslim. We have delayed our return to Shrirangapattan; religious affairs and making

> war against the *kafirs* are more important to us than everything else.'

The number four hundred thousand should not seem unrealistic. If one considers the estimate of the combined population in 1800 CE of India, Pakistan and Bangla Desh, the first census of 1881, the rate of population growth and other factors, one can infer that the Hindu population of Malabar could have been four million in 1785 CE. (I am not going into details here for want of space in this booklet; they will be included in my forthcoming book.)It is thus not implausible that Tipu could have converted four hundred thousand Hindus. Moreover, for converting this large number it was enough to merely convert a hundred or a hundred and twenty-five thousand married males since others in a family have no recourse except following the head of the family. The census figures of 2011 CE show that the proportion of the Muslim population was 5.86% in Tamil Nadu, 12.91% in Karnataka and 26.56% in Kerala. The relatively high figure of Muslims in Kerala could be a result of the forced conversions carried out by Tipu.

5. Changing Place Names

Although Shakespeare asks, 'What is in a name?', it would seem there is little substance in the question. That is why names of Hindus were changed after they were converted. It was necessary to sever the very roots of their earlier existence. Shaikh

Ahmad Sarhindi was a Sufi preacher of the Nakshbandi sect who lived in the time of Akbar and Jahangir. A Muslim poet of the time had assumed a Hindu *nom de plume* for his poetry. In a letter Sarhindi wrote to a nobleman, he asks the latter to inform the poet to expunge the *kafir* name.

Perhaps out of a craving to demonstrate their prowess, Islamic invaders in India had a penchant for changing existing names of towns. An English civil servant in British India, F. S. Growse, knew about this obsession and had come to develop an aversion to it. He was serving as Collector at Bullandshahar. The original name of the town was Baran which, according to local tradition, can be traced to the name of a Hindu king, Ahibaran. The Baranwal community looks up to this Ahibaran as its progenitor. Growse has written a book in which he expresses his conjecture that the name of the town might have been changed to Bullandshahar during the reign of Aurangzeb, and says:

> "Apparently it was imposed by the Muhammadans during the reign of Aurangzeb, when the ruling power was possessed by a mania ... for the abolition of every name that suggested recollection of an earlier dynasty..."

Growse was of the view that the old name ought to be restored, and did not feel it would be difficult to do so. He writes:

> "The most favourable opportunity for reviving the older and shorter name has unfortunately been lost, but even now the change might be effected without causing more than a very slight and merely temporary inconvenience..."

The primacy that 'Islam' commanded in Aurangzeb's thinking may be seen from the 'Islamic' names he foisted on geographical locations. Some 'specific' Islamic names he gave and the year (CE) in which they were given:

(1) Chakan (Maharashtra) – Islamabad (1660).
(2) Jamnagar (Gujarat) – Islamnagar (1663).
(3) Chatgaon (now in Bangla Desh) – Islamabad (1666).
(4) Devgadh (near Nagpur, Maharashtra) – Islamgadh (1666).
(5) Mathura (U.P.) – Islamabad (1670).
(6) Raigad (Maharashtra) – Islamgadh (1689).
(7) Bramhapuri (Dist. Solapur, Maharashtra) – Islampuri (1695).
(8) Mahadev Hills (Shikhar Shinganapur, Maharashtra) – Jabal ul-Islam, or Mountain of Islam.
(9) Bhivandi (Maharashtra). This town had already been renamed to Islamabad during a previous regime, but the changed name went out of use during Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's time. Aurangzeb revived this name in 1704, changing the name of Chakan (Islamabad) to

Muminabad. 'Momin' is a believer, i.e. a Muslim.

None of the nine names, containing 'Islam', that Aurangzeb gave to various places remained in usage for any significant period. Islamic rulers referred to Kashi (or Varanasi) as Banaras. Aurangzeb renamed it to Muhammadabad. But even that went out of use. Nevertheless, the name Aurangabad (Khadki, Maharashtra) that Aurangzeb gave continues to hold its own.

6. Collaboration of Sufis with Islamic Rulers

Sufism is a cult within Islam that has a particular manner of worshipping Allah. It has several sub-cults. Most of these follow Sunni Islam, but there are a few that are aligned to the Shia faction, too. The Chishti, Nakshbandi, Suhrawardi and Qadiri were the more prevalent Sunni factions in India. There was also the Shia Noorbakhshiya cult that was present in India for some time in Kashmir. The Sufis functioned in *khanqahs*, their spiritual master was called a *murshid* or *shaikh* and the disciples were called *murids*. A person appointed by a *murshid* to succeed him was called *khalifa*. Sufi teachings bear many similarities to the *advaita* (non-dualism) philosophy of the Vedanta. The origins of Sufism may be traced back to the 9th and 10th Centuries, but many Sufi cults take their traditions back to the Prophet's younger cousin Ali, who was also the Prophet's son-in-law and the Fourth Khalifa.

Similarities with *advaita* led some Sufis away from Islam and they became attracted to Hindu thought. A few of them developed a repugnance for Islam and one of them, in fact, expressed his desire to become Hindu. However, Hindu society then had no system by which a person not born Hindu could be taken into the Hindu fold. An arrangement was in place to bring Hindus who had been converted out of Hinduism back into Hinduism, but the number of such re-conversions was insignificant. The number of Sufis who had become attracted to Hinduism being very small, they cannot be viewed as representative of Sufism. A vast majority of Sufis always remained unbending Muslims.

Sufis played a significant role in propagating Islam in India. Biographical compilations of Sufis state that many of them performed miracles. Some Hindus are sure to have been impressed by such miracles and could have converted to Islam. But many of the Sufi preachers adopted means that were aggressive and intolerant. A few examples of this tendency shall suffice.

The *dargah* of Muinuddin Chishti at Ajmer is well known. This Sufi came to India around the same time as did Muhammad Ghori. It is stated in Abdul Haq Muhaddis' *Akhbarul-Akhyar*, which contains biographies of Sufis, that at a time when Muinuddin was fairly advanced in years, a disciple brought him a *kafir* princess who had been captured in war as a 'gift'. He accepted the 'gift' and, in time, she also bore him a child. Muinuddin thus fulfilled the right bestowed on him by the tenets of his religion – having sexual relations with a captive *kafir* woman.

Another Sufi from the same Chishti cult, Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi, lived during Babur's time. He wrote to Babur advising him not to appoint *kafirs* to offices in a Muslim state, to make them aware of their lowliness, to impose *jizya* on them and to prohibit them from publicly observing *kafir* customs.

Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi, who lived during the time of Akbar and Jahangir, was overjoyed when the latter had the Fifth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Arjun Dev, tortured to death in 1606. Sarhindi wrote in a letter to Shaikh Farid Bukhari, a nobleman in Jahangir's court:

> "It is good that the accursed *kafir* of Govindwal [i.e. Guru Arjun] has been killed, and resulted in the comprehensive defeat of the Hindus. May they [i.e. Hindus] be killed for any reason and may they be destroyed for any motive; belittling *kafirs* is the very life of the people of Islam."

Sarhindi says in another letter written to the same Shaikh Farid:

> "The honour of Islam and the people of Islam (meaning Muslims) is in dishonouring *kafirs* and *kafir* hood. The aim of collecting *jizya* is to dishonour and insult *kafirs*. Islam will be

> dishonoured to the extent that *kafirs* gain status. *Jihad* and harshness against *kafirs* are among essential aspects of this religion (meaning Islam)."

> He writes to Lala Baig Kabuli:
> "It is among the great customs of Islam in India to sacrifice the cow. (Because) *kafirs* may perhaps agree to pay *jizya*, but will never consent to sacrifice a cow."

This is why Sarhindi was insistent about cow sacrifice. Not slaughtering the cow in order to care for Hindu sentiments was akin to honouring *kafirs*, and some Muslim clerics issued *fatwas* even in the 20th Century declaring those Muslims who advocated a ban on cow slaughter as sinners.

Cows used to be deliberately slaughtered by Islamic regimes in India in order to hurt Hindu sentiments. Jahangir's forces captured the Kangra Fort in Himachal Pradesh in 1620 CE. Jahangir visited the fort in 1622 CE. He writes in his autobiography, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, that all Islamic customs were followed, a cow was also slaughtered. According to what French traveller Thevenot says, Aurangzeb, in 1645-46, converted a Jain temple in Ahmedabad built by Shantidas into a mosque and slaughtered a cow there. After Aurangzeb had issued orders to destroy the temple at Pandharpur in 1706 CE, butchers from the army camp had been asked to slaughter cows therein. Muinuddin Chishti also butchered cows in Ajmer; plainly, the main intention was to hurt Hindu sentiment.

Kashmir was under Islamic rule when Sayyid Ali Hamadani, an Islamic preacher belonging to the Kubrawiya branch of the Suhrawardi Sufi sect, came there in the 14th Century. He converted the priest of the Kali temple in Shrinagar to Islam and had the temple demolished at the hands of the same converted priest. The *Zakiratul-Muluk* (meaning Treasures of the Sultans) by Sayyid Ali deals with the duties of Muslim rulers and lists twenty conditions that must be imposed on *kafirs*. Some of them are:

(1) No new idol-temples may be built.
(2) Muslim travellers cannot be prohibited from resting in temples.
(3) *Kafirs* must not ride mounts with saddles and reins.
(4) If required, Muslims may stay in a *kafir's* house for three days.
(5) *Kafirs* must not mourn their dead co-religionists loudly.

This Sayyid Ali converted thousands of Hindus in Kashmir, demolished many temples and built mosques and *khanqahs* in their place.

Thousands of Hindu families in the 15th Century were forcibly converted to Islam by Islamic regimes in Kashmir under the influence of Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi, a Sufi preacher of the Noorbakhshiya sect. A Hindu leader called Nirmal Kantthabhatt later brought them back to Hinduism.

On the instigation of Iraqi, however, Islamic rulers massacred Kantthabhatt along with eight hundred other Hindu leaders and re-converted all the families.

Islamic rulers had respect for Sufis. No Sufi is known to have taught Islamic rulers not to destroy temples, not to impose *jizya*, not to massacre or enslave *kafir* prisoners of war, not to harm the dignity of *kafir* women captives, etc. On the contrary, many Sufis are known to have advocated and even participated in atrocities.

7. Bigotry curtailed only by practical considerations

While atrocities were a feature of Islamic regimes, it does not mean that they were being perpetrated everywhere and on a daily basis. It is necessary to collect taxes for running a state, and taxes come from farming and trade. Therefore, at least a semblance of law and order is required for agriculture and businesses to run. Tyrannizing the population on a daily basis was thus not convenient even for the most fanatical Muslim ruler, and even the worst of them had to rein in his religious zeal to some extent. Aurangzeb, when he was Governor of Gujarat (1645-46), desecrated and demolished Shantidas Jhaveri's Jain Temple, and converted it into a mosque. However, Shah Jahan gave orders for part of the temple to be handed back to Shantidas. Shah Jahan had committed many acts of religious fanaticism before this Shantidas temple matter, as he did thereafter. On this backdrop, why had he issued such an order? History does not provide an answer. Shantidas was wealthy and probably wielded influence in the corridors of power. Possibly, many courtiers were under his obligation. It is possible that some of them, especially Prince Dara Shukoh, could have pleaded on behalf of Shantidas, and Shah Jahan might have found it inconvenient to decline their mediation. Whatever be the reasons, tolerance was certainly not one of them; some consideration of practical convenience must have prompted Shah Jahan's order.

A certain Rajput *mansabdar* called Indraman Dhandhera was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment by Shah Jahan. In 1655, when Aurangzeb was *subedar* of the Deccan, he sent a recommendation to Shah Jahan for the release of this Indraman. Shah Jahan accepted the plea but laid down a condition that Indraman should be made Muslim. Thereupon Aurangzeb requested his father not to insist on Indraman's conversion. Aurangzeb had displayed his religious bigotry on innumerable occasions before this incident, as he had done even afterwards. Yet he was pleading against the condition of conversion! So why was Aurangzeb acting in an uncharacteristic manner? The reason seems quite simple to unravel. Some Rajput *mansabdars* were probably interceding for Indraman, and Aurangzeb did not wish to antagonize them in view of the war of succession that seemed a certainty in the near future.

We may conclude that what *prima facie* may seem examples of tolerance displayed by Islamic rulers are actually very likely to be examples of compromises they made with their religious fervour for some practical considerations. Islamic rulers in India were always guided by two inspirations: their faith in Islam and political expediency. Their faith would urge them to acts like imposing *jizya*, but a vast majority of their subjects being Hindu and also having Hindu officials in their employ, they had to keep that urge in check. The policy adopted by the ruler fluctuated according to the varying influence of these two factors, which in turn was determined by the ruler's nature and prevailing circumstances or the ruler's perception of prevailing circumstances. This was perhaps why someone like Afzal Khan, who prided himself as a *kafir*-killer and idol-breaker,or temple-destroyer even in the period prior to 1659 CE, continued the pre-existing grant to a Hindu Monastery in the *pargana* of Wai that was bestowed on him as his *jagir*.

Not all Islamic rulers in India were religious fanatics; there indeed were some who evinced tolerance, but they were exceptions. Akbar underwent considerable improvement in the latter half of his reign. Zainul-Abideen of Kashmir, perhaps because he was healed of an ailment by a Hindu doctor, and Ibrahim Adilshah II are examples of tolerant Islamic rulers. Akbar had begun worshipping Agni (fire) and Surya (the Sun), Ibrahim was a worshipper of Saraswati (the Hindu Goddess of

Learning) and Zainul-Abideen had done a pilgrimage of Hindu sacred places in Kashmir. Not accepting or worshipping any God but Allah is the fundamental Islamic creed. Can these 'tolerant' rulers be regarded as sincere, true Muslims? I feel they cannot. We may observe that the tolerant Islamic rulers in India were attracted to Hinduism. Indian history provides no instance of an Islamic ruler who was true to the tenets of his religion and was not attracted to Hinduism but was tolerant of the religion of others.

If the attraction for Hindu thought had brought about a change for the better in an Islamic ruler in terms of tolerance for other faiths, it does not seem to have seeped down to his officials, nor carried down to his successors. The tolerance was limited to that single individual. Even after Akbar's 'reformation', Jain Temples were destroyed and some European Christian sailors were put to death because they refused to convert. Akbar is not known to have punished the officials responsible for these acts. Akbar's son Jahangir was a fanatical bigot; so were Zainul-Abideen's son Haji Khan *alias* Hyder Shah and Ibrahim Adilshah's son Muhammad. On this backdrop, even if Dara Shukoh had won the war of succession to become the Emperor, no significant change might have occurred in the course of Indian history. How did the advent of Zainul-Abideen or Ibrahim Adilshah affect history? Did Hindu-Muslim relations improve because Akbar had reformed? If there was any effect at all, it was temporary at best.

Even if Dara Shukoh had become Emperor, the result would have been no different. The root of the malady was never—and is never—in a person; it is in an intolerant thought system.

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Part II : Aims and Objects of Chhatrapati Shivaji's State

The aims and objects with which Shivaji founded a state may be better understood if we consider the following points:

(1) Shivaji's own words and deeds
(2) What his associates thought about his aims
(3) What his adversaries thought about him
(4) What comparatively neutral people living at the time thought about his aims
(5) What the actions of Shivaji's political successors tell us about his objectives.

(1) Shivaji's own words and deeds

The earliest letter discovered so far that bears Shivaji's seal is dated 28th January 1646 CE. The seal is in Sanskrit. Even his father's seal was in Persian. This fact by itself must have been sufficient to bring home to some people that a new era had commenced.

The Saptakoteshwar Temple at Divadi in Goa was demolished by Muslim rulers. Later, a minister of the Vijayanagar Empire re-built it, but it was again demolished by the Portuguese in 1540 CE. Local Hindus removed the *shivalinga* to Narve, which was at the time beyond the dominion of Portuguese Goa, and installed it within a small temple. The temple was probably in a state of disrepair in Shivaji's time. He restored it or perhaps built a new temple in 1668 CE. The precincts have a stone inscription with these details, but the incident is also mentioned in the *Shivarajyabhishek Kalpataru*, which is a work that recounts Shivaji's second coronation conducted according to the advice of Nishchalpuri.

The introductory comments to the *Rajyavyavaharakosha*, a lexicon of administrative terms in Sanskrit commissioned by Shivaji, state:

> "He [Shivaji] re-consecrated, with due religious observances, the shrine of Shonachalpati, which had for long been in a state of destruction by the Muslims, and recommenced rites and rituals for worship of Shrimushna, Vriddhagiri and Rukmasabhadhip so that his deeds would be remembered by posterity. After the *yavanas* were completely subdued in the land, Shivaji commissioned [Raghunath] Pandit to render a lexicon of administration, usage of which had become despoiled by the Muslim tongue, so that its propagation in cultured language [Sanskrit] may be facilitated."

(A Shiva temple called Arunachalapati or Shonachalapati is located at the foot of a hill called Arunachalam or Shonachalam in Tiruvannamalai. In the Cuddalore District of Tamil Nadu, at Srimushnam, is a temple dedicated to Bhuvaraha, the boar-incarnation of Lord Vishnu. At

Vrudhhachalam in the same district is the Vrudhhagirishwar Shiva temple. The Shiva temple of Kanakasabhadhip or Rukmasabhadhip is located at Chidambaram.)

At the beginning of the 19th Century, a certain Narayanan Pillai wrote a history of various regimes in Karnataka (which at that time included present day Tamil Nadu) in Tamil using a variety of old sources. M. Gnanou Diagou made an annotated translation of a part of this history into French. The original Tamil is called *Karnatak Rajakkal Savistar Charitram*, while the French translation is called *Histoire Dètaillèe des Rois du Carnatic*. Pillai wrote his book on orders of William McLeod, the Commissioner of Arcot, using both Hindu and Muslim sources. The preface to the French translation says Pillai's account is free from the exaggeration usually found in old Hindu *bakhars*. An English translation of a part of the French book:

> "After carrying out repairs at the fort of Jinji, and appointing Ramaraja [Rajaram] as king there, King Shivaji himself went to Tiruvannamalai. He was a devotee of Lord Shiva. It must be noted here that the Muslims had destroyed the temple of Lord Shiva in Tiruvannamalai and the temple of Samottir Perumal [Lord Vishnu] and converted them into mosques. Shivaji demolished both the mosques, built the temple of Lord Shiva again, and built a staircase, with the bricks of

> the Samottir Perumal temple that had been demolished, around the *mandapa* with a thousand pillars built by the Nayak Rajas. He collected a hundred thousand cows for the consecration of Shivalingam. It was he who started the festival of Kartikadipam on the hill there."

The statement about Rajaram being appointed king is incorrect, while the number of cows is an obvious over-estimation. But the *Rajyavyavahara-kosha* corroborates Pillai's statement that Shivaji re-built the Shiva temple at Tiruvannamalai. Although the *Rajyavyvaharkosha* does not say that a mosque was built there to replace an earlier temple, we have innumerable instances of temples being demolished to make way for mosques, or temples being converted into mosques. I feel the Shiva Temple at Tiruvannamalai had been converted into a mosque. It appears from Pillai's description that the hall of pillars that the earlier Nayak rulers had built was intact when Shivaji re-built the temple. Anyone wishing to convert a temple into a mosque followed a fairly simple procedure. The overall structure was retained, but the sanctum sanctorum was demolished. Then, a wall was built on the west to indicate the direction to face while praying. This done, one had his mosque. To convert it back into a temple, all one did was demolish the wall on the west, re-build the sanctum sanctorum and install an idol therein. I have examined two such temples: the Shiva Temple at Bankapur and the Mairal Temple on a hill behind the J.S.S. College in Dharwar (both in Karnataka). In both cases, the original temples had been converted into mosques according to the technique discussed above; both were converted back into temples under Maratha rule. They remain temples to this day. Anyone unfamiliar with the historical background of those temples will never suspect that they had once been converted into mosques. It is quite possible that Shivaji might have converted the mosque at Tiruvannamalai into a temple in a similar manner.

A Jesuit priest called Andre Freire was stationed at the Jesuit Mission in Madura from 1656 CE, and became its head in 1666 CE. He gives an account of Shivaji's Gingee Campaign of 1677-78 CE in letters he sent to Europe. In a letter he sent from Veernam in the Gingee territory in 1678 CE, he writes:

> "Shivaji knew the great strength of Musalmans in India. He had banished them from his kingdom, treated them with great dishonour and desecrated their mosques."

When Freire says Shivaji desecrated mosques, he is probably referring to the same mosques at Tiruvannamalai that Pillai says Shivaji demolished. The *Rajyavyavaharakosha* says Shivaji resumed the formal festivals at Srimushna, Vrudhhagiri and Rukmasabhadhip, which implies that they had ceased to be held prior to Shivaji's visit. The reason is obvious: the regime was Islamic. It is quite possible that the priesthood and devotees of these temples had themselves decided to stop daily and occasional observances out of a genuine apprehension that they would attract the attention of Islamic rulers who might swoop down on them and destroy their places of worship. The situation changed with Shivaji's arrival, so religious ceremonies were resumed.

If we consider the evidence of the *Rajyavyavaharakosha*, Pillai's book and Freire's letter together, it appears that of the two mosques at Tiruvannamalai that had been converted from earlier temples, Shivaji re-converted at least one and demolished the other.

We have another piece of evidence to show that Shivaji demolished mosques. The Shivabharat says Afzal Khan wrote a letter to Shivaji when he learnt that the latter had deployed his forces in Javli in readiness for war. The contents of that letter, according to the *Shivabharat*, were:

> "You conquered Kalyan and Bhiwandi and demolished the mosques there. Muslims are still angry with you as you have thoroughly plundered and humiliated them. Taking no cognizance of your own strength, you have imprisoned Muslim priests and dared audaciously to block the path of Islam. "

John Fryer, a medical doctor employed by the English East India Company, was travelling from

Mumbai to Junnar in 1675 CE. A section of his route passed through Shivaji's territory. On 24th April 1675, Fryer with about 30 servants reached Kalyan, which at the time was in Shivaji's dominions. The Maratha officer in charge allotted a large mosque for Fryer's overnight stay. Fryer notes that there were several mosques in Kalyan and the mullahs formerly received fat pensions; that Shivaji, being a Hindu, would otherwise have certainly demolished them but deliberately brushing aside the intention of the original donors and builders, he converted them into granaries, especially those within the town.

As Afzal Khan says, it is quite likely that Shivaji might have demolished some mosques in Kalyan. But Fryer could hardly be expected to know of them; all he saw were mosques converted into granaries. The mosques Shivaji might have demolished would have most likely been those built after demolishing earlier temples.

I have referred to the *Rajyavyavaharakosha* that Shivaji commissioned with the intention of eliminating the use of alien words and promote the use of Sanskrit substitutes in administrative parlance. Netoji Palkar had been forcibly converted to Islam by Aurangzeb. When he returned to Shivaji, he was re-converted to Hinduism through the ritual of 'purification'.

Shivaji's acts, such as re-conversion of temples that had been transformed into mosques, purging the Marathi language of alien influence and resuming the use of Sanskrit words in place of those that had intruded into Marathi due to Islamic rule, or bringing back a forcibly converted Netoji to Hinduism, all reveal a common motive: to reverse changes made by tyrannical and fanatical Islamic regimes.

Tolerance is NOT Uniform Attitude towards all Religions (*sarva-dharma-samabhav*)

We know of just a few examples that Shivaji or his political successors rebuilt temples in place of mosques that were built by demolishing earlier temples. That was because destroying mosques was never a part of their policy. They held the view that even a mosque was, after all, someone's place of worship. Their wrath was not directed at the place of worship; the Hindu State was intrinsically tolerant. Their ire was against Islamic regimes that imposed *jizya*, broke idols and destroyed temples, massacred or enslaved prisoners of war, dishonoured women, or indulged in conversion activities. Hindus had studied neither the Quran nor the Prophet's biography. They believed it would be enough to merely extinguish tyrannical Islamic rule. It is obvious that some immediate local causes or reasons must have prompted them to demolish even the few mosques that they demolished. And, while their state policy was one of tolerance, it was certainly not one characterized by uniform attitude towards all religions (*sarva-dharma-samabhav*). And that was quite natural. Whatever new grants were given, were made to *their* places of worship and *their* religious undertakings. Even if any new grants were at all given to institutions of other religions, they were but rare exceptions. The idea of uniform attitude towards all religions is a delusion, a chimera. Tolerance is distinct from uniform attitude towards all religions; the latter can only have one manifestation – a feeling of equal disdain or equal apathy for all religions! That all religions impart the same teachings, is another fallacy. All religions are different and distinct.

Shivaji promoted Hinduism and Hindu culture in more ways than one. Grain was given annually for the subsistence of those engaged in studying Vedic texts. The *panchanga* (or Hindu calendric system) is an aspect of the Hindu way of life; Hindu religious observances and festivals depend on it. A scholar called Krishna Jyotishi wrote a treatise on the *panchanga* called the *Karanakaustubh* in Sanskrit. The treatise says that it was composed on Shivaji's orders to refine the then existing *panchanga.* Shivaji had immense veneration for Sanskrit; his seal was in that language. The seals of most of his officials, too, were in Sanskrit or Marathi. There are just two or three exceptions who, quite possibly, had been deputed to Shivaji's service by his father Shahji, and had thus not been under the influence of Shivaji's world-view. Shivaji's biography called the *Anupuran*, which Kavindra Paramananda wrote on Shivaji's orders, is also in Sanskrit. The *Anupuran* is ordinarily known as the *Shivabharat.* Shivaji's son Sambhaji knew Sanskrit. He wrote a small treatise called the *Budhabhooshan* in Sanskrit when he was but a prince. Later, after he had succeeded his father as Chhatrapati, he wrote a Sanskrit *shloka* (couplet) in his own hand at the beginning of a deed of gift in Sanskrit. It is obvious that Shivaji had made the necessary arrangement to teach Sanskrit to Sambhaji.

The rituals with which Shivaji was coronated were also in accordance with Hindu scriptures. Several writers claim that some brahmins of the time had opposed the ceremony. Whether the ceremony was really opposed by anyone, why it was opposed and how many people opposed it shall be discussed in my forthcoming book. But let us assume for the moment that it was opposed. If, despite the opposition, Shivaji had insisted upon a coronation according to Vedic rites, it only shows his dedication to his Hindu beliefs all the more. Opposition from one's own people was not new for him. His own people had spared no efforts to eliminate him. But that did not cause him to forego his faith or give up the work he had undertaken.

Shivaji made new grants to Hindu temples. For instance, he made a new grant to the Ganapati Temple in the Kasba area of Pune in 1647 CE to pay for the continuance of daily oil lamps. He built a Bhavani Temple on Pratapgad and made arrangements for the grocery expenses of ten devotees every day. He made a number of grants to the Ramdasi

Cult, to the Ganapati Temple at Chinchwad and to the Mauni Baba Mutt at Patgaon.

There is not even one example of a new grant given to a *dargah* or a mosque. Shivaji continued some few pre-existing grants to mosques, but even there we find one exception. Shivaji discontinued a grant given to two helpers at a mosque in Indapur during his regime, but were later restored by the local Mughal *jagirdar* when the helpers complained to him in 1663 CE that "Shivaji Bhosla" had terminated their source of income. Shivaji gave grants to individual Hindu sadhus but there is not even a single example of a grant being likewise made to a Muslim. A lie is attempted to be put out these days that Shivaji built a mosque on the Raigad Fort. There is absolutely no evidence that Shivaji ever built a mosque anywhere, much less on Raigad. For some years after 1689 CE, Raigad was in possession of the Mughals and later under the control of the Siddi still it was re-captured by the Marathas. It is likely that the mosque was built during that period.

After Shivaji's Gingee campaign was concluded and he was returning to Maharashtra, his younger half-brother Ekoji attacked the Maratha forces stationed near Gingee, but was driven away. Shivaji received news of this attack and wrote to Ekoji in November 1677 CE. A part of that letter reads:

> "We learnt that misguided by the Turks [Muslims] you assembled and sent your army against our men.... Your men were defeated. Having heard this we wondered how in spite of your being a son of the Maharaja [Shahji] you do not reflect and do not discriminate between sin and righteousness. Then there is no wonder that you will be brought to distress. You would ask what you should think. [We would answer] you should have thought that '... Now we should give him half the share which he [Shivaji] is demanding and should be happy.' You should have thought 'He [Shivaji] is blessed by Shri Mahadeo [Shiva] and Goddess Bhavani. He kills the wicked Turks [Muslims]. How could I win [against him] when my army also has Turks [Muslims]? How should the Turks hope to escape with their lives?' You should have thought thus and should not have brought upon open hostilities."

If one considers the entire context of "He kills the wicked Turks.", one would appreciate that the adjective 'wicked' is used not for describing a certain group of Turks, but all Turks. This also gives an indication about who Shivaji was fighting. There were occasions when he had to fight against his own people, but that was unavoidable. Another point needs consideration. Shivaji tells Ekoji that he ought to have wondered "How could I win [against him] when my army also has Turks [Muslims]?". In other words, Shivaji is telling his brother, 'I kill the wicked

Turks, and your army having them in majority, how did you hope to win?' Shivaji would hardly have derided his brother thus if his army had Turks in large number.

Some people these days indulge in motivated propaganda that Muslims were employed in large numbers in Shivaji's military forces. This is completely false propaganda. There were very few Muslims in Shivaji's service. The Muslims in his service till 1658 CE or so were those appointed by Shahji. The *sarnaubat* (commander) of Shivaji's infantry (and not of his entire military staff) at that time was a Muslim called Noor Baig. The year 1658 CE is very important in Shivaji's life because it was in that year that Shivaji parted ways politically with his father who was in the service of the Adilshah, and Shivaji embarked on the work of administration independent of his father. None of the Muslim officials Shahji might have assigned to Shivaji are known to have continued in service after 1657 CE. This accounts for five out of the twelve Muslims who were known to be in Shivaji's service. Noor Baig was one of them. Shivaji was obliged to employ some Muslims for reasons of usefulness – for instance, Daulat Khan as a naval commander for the simple reason that Marathas had no experience of naval warfare. Take a recent example. Chiefs of Naval Staff of the Indian Navy, for ten long years after India's independence, were British nationals; lack of opportunity had prevented Indian naval officers to acquire the requisite experience to discharge the responsibilities of the high office. Even the Muslims who were employed by Shivaji for reasons of convenience, were few. If these are excluded, it will be seen that Muslims in Shivaji's service did not add up to even half a percent. In a forthcoming book, I propose to furnish a list of persons in Shivaji's employ, duly supported by evidence, which will clarify the matter.

We need to address another issue. It is not enough to merely take a head count of the number of Muslims in Shivaji's army and the number of Hindus in Aurangzeb's army. We need to also ascertain who was fighting with what purpose. For instance, during India's freedom struggle, who were the soldiers or policemen beating up or shooting down freedom fighters? They were mostly Indians. But, only on that basis, it cannot be termed as an internecine conflict between Indians. Even if those wielding batons or guns were Indian, the batons and guns were provided by the British rulers. The Mughal forces were commanded by Man Singh at the Battle of Haldighati. Abdul Qadir Badauni writes in his Persian book *Muntakhabut-Tawarikh* (meaning History's Select) that, because of Man Singh's generalship on that day, he understood what was meant by Mulla Shiri's verse, 'A Hindu wields the sword of Islam'. Man Singh was Hindu, but the sword he brandished was Islam's. Several Hindus—including many who were Marathi—fought against Shivaji. Yet, the nature of the conflict does not become 'Hindu against Hindu' or 'Marathi against Marathi' because the swords those Hindu or Marathi soldiers raised against Shivaji were essentially Adilshahi or Mughal.

Some commentators do a head count as stated earlier and propound that Shivaji's conflict with Islamic regimes was political in nature. After all, what does 'political' imply? In the ultimate analysis, it is conflict for gaining political power. But what was Shivaji's aim in acquiring political power? In the opinion of some, political power is the ultimate goal for the satisfaction of personal, self-seeking ambitions. But in the opinion of some others, political power is, at least to some extent, a means for achieving more comprehensive and perhaps more profound objectives. Shivaji had set for himself goals such as the latter. We shall in due course see—with all the requisite evidence—what that objective was. A few Muslims in his service cannot be an indication of a dilution or compromise of Shivaji's main aim.

(2) What his associates thought about his aims

In the Sanskrit Deed of Gift that Sambhaji signed and sealed on 27th August 1680, he extols Shivaji with the adjective 'he who had, at the first blossoming of youth, imbibed the aspiration of destroying Muslims'.

Paramananda's *Shivabharat* says several times that Shivaji is destroyer of the *yavanas* (i.e.

Muslims), and that he has incarnated for that reason alone. One verse reads:

> 'This contains a description of the many battles fought against the *yavanas* (i.e. Muslims) by Shivaji whose incarnation on this earth is for the destruction of the *yavanas* (i.e. Muslims).'

The *Shivabharat* tells us what Ali Adilshah said when he dispatched Afzal Khan against Shivaji:

> 'Alas! The religion of the *mlecchas* (Muslims) is being destroyed by that over-enthusiastic, proud, daring man (i.e. Shivaji) who has pride for his own religion.' (17:12)

> 'This alert, fiercely valiant and deceitful (Shivajiraja) has been humiliating *yavanas* from the beginning of his youth.' (17:21)

Even though Paramananda ascribes these words to the Adilshah, they are undoubtedly his own. Sambhaji's interpretation of his father's attitude towards Muslims and the *Shivabharat*'s statement about how Shivaji insulted Muslims from a young age, are mutually supportive. It is far more prudent to trust the opinion of his contemporaries like Sambhaji and Paramananda, who had personally observed his actions closely, than to rely on some recent view that Shivaji practised 'uniform attitude towards all religions'.

The third witness is Jairam Pindye, who composed the *Radhamadhav-vilas* that appears from internal evidence to have been compiled after 1664 CE. Pindye uses an adjective for Shivaji which means, 'one who wields the sword to cut down the whole forest of *yavana* power that has become prevalent in Kali Yuga'. Pindye was with Shivaji from 1670 to 1673 CE as may be inferred from references in *Parnalparvata-grahan-akhyanam,* his work in Sanskrit verse. In that work, he attributes to Bahlool Khan and other Adilshahi nobles the view that 'Shivaji is the harbinger of the prophesied incarnation of Vishnu, Kalki, whose aim is to destroy the *yavanas*, and that work has already begun'. Needless to state, this feeling is not any Khan's, but Pindye's.

The fourth witness is the poet, Bhooshan. He met Shivaji on Raigad and completed his *Shivabhooshan* in Braj verse in 1673 CE. Several lines therein talk about Shivaji's motive. Two of them say:

> "The powerful Shivaraj is always enthusiastic in achieving the prosperity of Hindus and their land."
> "Says Bhooshan, he wars against the *mlechhas* because he desires to rid the Earth of *mlechhas.*"

Bhooshan is saying nothing different than what Sambhaji, Paramananda and Jairam Pindye are telling us about Shivaji's goals. That goal was the protection of Hindus and the destruction of *mlechhas* or, in fact, destruction of *mlechhas* for the protection of Hindus.

Chhatrasal is the next witness. A biography of Chhatrasal called the *Chhatraprakas* was composed on his orders by Lal Kavi in Braj verse. Chhatrasal must have furnished all the biographical material to the poet. Chhatrasal had met Shivaji in 1670-71 CE. A portion of the advice Shivaji gave him is as follows:

"Oh Chhatrasal! Conquer your land and rule over it. We are not separate from you. Kill the Mughals, defeat the army from Delhi. Do not pay heed to the Turks [i.e. Muslims]. Do not expect them to act with discretion or morality...we have lifted our sword against the Turks. Do you also return to your province, gather your forces and destroy the Turks with the power of your sword.'

Very close relations appear to have developed between Shivaji and Ramdas from the year 1672 CE. Both had immense respect for one another. For that reason, one must necessarily take into account what Ramdas felt about Shivaji's work. He eulogizes Shivaji in the well-known Marathi poem which begins with words describing him as a 'Bulwark of Determination'. He narrates the miserable conditions that existed before Shivaji emerged on the scene and praises him for being peerless in re-establishing and protecting all that was good in society. In effect, Ramdas is telling Shivaji that he succeeded in holding aloft the flag of Hinduism.

Shivaji's words and deeds tell us precisely what his close associates who had seen him in person are saying. Nevertheless, so-called commentators frown at this evidence, however glaring it is. They seem to insinuate that, where Shivaji himself was not clear about his objectives, the question of his associates appreciating them does not arise! They seem to almost believe their comprehension is divinely ordained, so that they have no need to look at any evidence at all !!

(3) What his adversaries thought about him

What his enemies thought about Shivaji and the work he had undertaken may be gauged from letters of the time and court histories. Whenever the name 'Shivaji' is mentioned, it is almost always accompanied by the choicest swearwords. But sometimes we get some additional details. The *Tarikh-i Ali* is a court history in Persian of Ali Adilshah's reign written by Noorulla. Here is a condensed translation of a portion of the book telling us of the appointment of Afzal Khan to campaign against Shivaji:

> "When the late King [Muhammad Adil-shah] fell ill, the banished *kafir*, Shivaji Bhosale, who was the virtual mentor of malevolent Satan in trickery and deceitfulness, plundered the entire province of Konkan and captured the fort of Rahir [Rayri]. When the King died, that

> malicious *kafir* [Shivaji] regarded that news as more joyous than the tidings of one's victory and captured [some more] forts in that province [Konkan]. He was extending the hand of repression and injustice like a greedy and hungry dog, that does not feel satisfied with the bone it gets and wants more, and was oppressing the faithful [Muslims] who were engrossed in prayers to God.
>
> "After the King [Ali Adilshah] received the news — because he thought that [the tree of] the observance of Muhammadi faith [Islam] would not bloom without the water of his bloodthirsty sword and the thorny bushes of infidelity and polytheism [i.e. Hinduism] would not burn without the fire of the enemy-consuming sword — appointed Afzal Khan with 10,000 horsemen with orders to fan the flames of anger and melt the balance of Shivaji's life in the crucible of destruction and to trample the harvest of his life under the hooves of horses."

Two points in this extract need to be considered. (1) Shivaji was doing injustice to Muslims. Of course, this was an allegation. But Afzal Khan, too, makes almost the same accusation in his letter which the *Shivabharat* says he wrote to Shivaji: "you have imprisoned Muslim priests and dared audaciously to block the path of Islam". (2) Islam shall not be rejuvenated and will not grow, nor will Hinduism be destroyed, unless Shivaji is uprooted completely. What Shivaji's associates understood as his mission in life and the objective he had set for himself, viz. the protection of Hindu society for which it was necessary to extinguish Islamic regimes, finds corroboration from his foes in the extract cited here.

Ali Adilshah sent a *farman* dated 16th June 1659 CE to Kanhoji Jedhe, around the same time as the Afzal Khan campaign. A translation of a portion of that Persian *farman* reads:

> "Shivaji out of thoughtlessness and evil propensities has started harassing the followers of Islam residing in the province of the Nizamhahi Konkan. He has also plundered them. He has captured many forts in the royal territories... Therefore, we have appointed Afzal Khan Muhammadshahi as the *subadar* of that province and have sent him with a formidable army."

The claim made in this *farman* that Shivaji was harassing Muslims in the Nizamshahi Konkan region (i.e. Kalyan, Bhiwandi and Chaul), is consistent with the narratives of the *Tarikh-i Ali* and *Shivabharat*. It is quite understandable that Shivaji's deeds, such as rebuilding or re-converting temples that had been destroyed or converted into mosques, imprisoning those Muslims who opposed such restoration, preventing temple demolitions, foiling attempts at conversion, forbidding cow slaughter and the like, must have seemed to the Adilshah a nuisance for Muslims, even though they may have been ethical because they foiled acts of injustice.

(4) What comparatively neutral people living at the time thought about his aims

The Chief Officer of the factory of the English East India Company at Rajapur, Henry Revington, wrote a letter to Shivaji on 13th February 1660 CE, soon after Afzal Khan was killed. He begins the letter with "To Sevagy, General of the Hendoo Forces". What Revington thought about Shivaji is amply clear from that line. Islamic rulers used to call their military forces the 'Armies of Islam'; Revington calls Shivaji's army as 'Hendoo Forces'.

We have already noted what Fryer experienced in 1675 CE during his night halt in Shivaji's dominions.

We have seen so far what we could glean from Shivaji's own words and deeds, and the opinions of his associates, his adversaries and his neutral contemporaries. Let us now examine what we may gather about his aims and objectives from the values inculcated by the state Shivaji founded.

(5) What the actions of Shivaji's political successors tell us about his objectives

A summary of the Sanskrit letter Sambhaji wrote in May-June 1683 to Mirza Raja Jai Singh's son, Ram Singh, is as follows:

"These days, the vile *yavana* (meaning Aurangzeb) feels that all Hindus have become devoid of self-esteem and pride for their faith. We cannot become oblivious to our royal duties of protecting our faith and our subjects. We are prepared to stake our all — our treasury, our land, our forts and all that we possess — to fight against this cruel Lord of the Yavanas... it is now time to cast this fiend in prison, re-consecrate Shree (i.e. the Hindu Deity) and resume all religious observances. We are determined to do so very soon. What will not be possible if you gather the courage to crush the *yavanas*? Yet, we are astonished that you reject the duties of your own *dharma* and sit idle."

A stone inscription dated 22nd March 1688 CE at Hadkolan is well known. It says that a certain merchant had made a representation to Dharmaji Nagnath, Sambhaji's official stationed at the place, that under the earlier Islamic regime, boats charged no fare to take one across the local river so that merchants used to happily ply their trade which augmented state revenue through taxes. But, after this "Hindu Rajya" (or Hindu State) came to be established, fare had begun to be charged causing loss in revenue for the state, so the merchant requested that no fare should be charged. Dharmaji Nagnath acceded to the request. The important point here is that even an ordinary merchant had become aware that a 'Hindu State' was in place.

In a letter dated 4th June 1691 CE addressed to Hanmantrao Ghorpade, Chhatrapati Rajaram expresses his resolve to protect 'Maharashtra Dharma' (i.e. Hindu Dharma) and also states his ambition of capturing Delhi. At a time when he was just twenty-two years old, and caught in a difficult situation in Gingee, Rajaram was contemplating the conquest of Delhi! What was the source of his daring aspiration? To use the words of Ramdas, it undoubtedly was the objective of 'extending Maharashtra *rajya* everywhere' laid down by Shivaji that was providing Rajaram with the necessary courage.

Limitations of space in this small book prevents me from providing more evidence. I shall nevertheless enumerate the outcomes that the Maratha Empire ushered in.

1. Massacres of prisoners of war and sale of peasants' families ended.
2. *Jizya* became but a bitter memory.
3. Demolition of temples ceased. Kashi had a thousand temples of which almost none prior to 1700 CE were standing, simply because they were demolished by Islamic regimes. Even if there were some that had escaped the attention of Islamic rulers, they must have numbered just one or two. Within a short time since, when Prinsep took a count in 1828, he found a thousand. Of course, the construction of these temples must have commenced after 1707 CE,

implying that a thousand temples were built in a hundred years.

4. The marriages of daughters of some utterly helpless Rajput rulers to Mughal royalty stopped dramatically.
5. Most importantly, forcible conversions stopped completely.

When India became independent, the Nizam of Hyderabad declined to accede to the Indian Union. The Indian army neutralized his opposition in a mere two days. Had the Nizam's territory been contiguous with Pakistan, this accession might not have been so easy. The merger was smooth mainly because he was isolated, and that isolation had been achieved by the Marathas. The desire to deal a death blow to the Nizam's rule was always in the back of their mind, as is evident from their correspondence. But their attention was concentrated on Delhi, Punjab and the North-West. In their view, the Nizam was like a weed growing in their kitchen garden, which could be uprooted at the time of their choosing. However, the work could not be completed during their years in power; it was later finished by the Indian army.

We may say that the objective which Shivaji set for himself had been fulfilled to a considerable extent. That objective was the protection of Hindu society and the decimation of Islamic regimes as a necessary condition for attainment of that objective. A line from Bhooshan's work tells us what might have been India's fate had Shivaji not emerged on the Indian scene at that moment in time:

> 'Had Shivaji not been, all would have been circumcised.'

I commenced the preface with a quote from Yashwantrao Chavan's speech. The language and the words that Bhooshan and Yashwantrao Chavan used may be different, but the message both convey is identical.

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